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# WESLEY'S LETTERS TO YOUNG WOMEN

A Series of Letters written by Rev. John Wesley to Several Young Christian Women

EDITED BY

FRANK G. PORTER, B.D.

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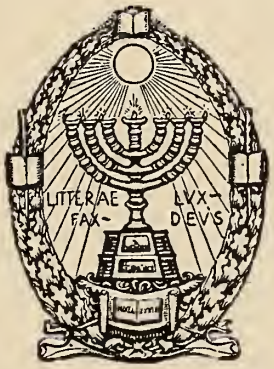


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# THE EDITOR'S LETTER.

IN the search for knowledge, which distinguishes the young women of to-day, a practical work on the spiritual life will prove of great service. All books on the devotional life give meditations or phases of the writer's experience, with applications to himself or to imaginary persons. The peculiar advantage of Wesley's letters to young women is that they were written to different individuals in answer to their correspondence, to meet the needs of everyday life. For this reason they touch almost every phase of young life, and lead from the beginnings of faith into the largest spiritual experience. How warm, fresh, and young these words of the experienced man of God!

Most of the letters were written when Wesley was between sixty and seventy years of age, and some of them after he had reached his

eightieth year. John Wesley was born in 1703; note his age from time to time, as you read, and, if possible, compare date of letters with his published Journals, and thus see what this wonderful man is doing when he snatches time to write to young Christians. If you receive but a part of the blessing that has come to the editor in selecting these letters the book will not have gone forth in vain.

FRANK G. PORTER.

*Aberdeen, Md.*

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# WESLEY'S LETTERS

TO

# YOUNG WOMEN.

## I.

### "FAITHFUL IN COMPARATIVELY LITTLE THINGS."

[For nearly thirty years Miss Furly was one of Mr. Wesley's special correspondents. Her father was a clergyman, living at Roach, highly esteemed by Mr. Wesley. He kept up his friendship with the family by the following affectionate letters. The correspondence began as a help to a suffering young woman, opening up the value of small service for God.]

*December* 22, 1756.

IT is a happy thing if we can learn obedience by the things which we suffer. Weakness of body and heaviness of mind will, I trust, have this good effect upon you. The particular lesson which you have now to learn is to be faithful in comparatively little things, particularly in conversation. God hath given you a tongue. Why? That you may praise

him therewith ; that all your conversation may be, for the time to come, "meet to minister grace to the hearers." Such conversation and private prayer exceedingly assist each other. By resolutely persisting, according to your little strength, in all works of piety and mercy, you are waiting on God in the old scriptural way. And therein he will come and save you. Do not think he is afar off. He is nigh that justifieth, that sanctifieth. Beware you do not thrust him away from you. Rather say,

> "My heart would now receive thee, Lord :
> Come in, my Lord, come in !"

Write as often and as freely and fully as you please to

Your affectionate brother and servant.

*To Miss Furly.*

## II.

### LOSING THE SENSE OF GOD'S LOVE.

[Sent from Bristol but written at Heptonstal-on-the Mountain. She had asked advice how to pick out acquaintances. There is a liking for the more genteel, and there is danger of losing the sense of God's love.]

BRISTOL, *May* 18, 1757.

THE great point is to pick out in Bristol, as in all places, such acquaintance as have a deep fear of God, a continual consciousness

of his presence, and a strong thirst after his whole image. Such I take most of the leaders of bands to be, and such are many of the poor in the society; but extremely few of the rich or honorable Methodists are of that number. My dear sister, I have been in pain for you on their account. When I talked with you last you could relish the simplicity of the Gospel; you were athirst for all the mind that was in Christ, and wanted to walk just as he walked. O, let none persuade you, either by example or advice, to make any, the least deviation from that good way. Make no abatement; do not soften the plain, rough Gospel; do not

Measure back your steps to earth again.

Be not, either inwardly or outwardly, conformed to this world, but be a Christian altogether.

Health you shall have if health be best. And He that gives it will give a blessing with it, an increase of spiritual as well as of bodily strength; but it is strength to labor, not to sit still. And this strength will either increase or decrease in the same proportion with your sense of his love. You may lose this sense either, 1. By committing sin. Or, 2. By omitting duty. Or, 3. By giving way to pride, anger,

or any other inward sin. Or, 4. By not watching unto prayer; by yielding to indolence or spiritual sloth. But it is no more necessary that we should ever lose it than it is necessary we should omit duty or commit sin.

*To Miss Furly.*

## III.

### "ALL THE PROMISES LIE FAIR BEFORE YOU."

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, *June* 14, 1757.

YOU have reason to praise God for what he has done and to expect all that he has promised. Indeed, if it were required that you should work this in yourself your impotence might be a bar to your expectations; and so might your unworthiness, if God required any merit of yours, in order to his working in you. But what impotence in you can be a bar to the almighty power of God? And what unworthiness can hinder the free love of God—his love in and through Christ Jesus? So that all the promises lie fair before you. The land flowing with milk and honey, the Canaan of his perfect love, is open. Believe, and enter in!

It is an observation of one of the ancients that it is far easier not to desire praise than not to be pleased with it. A bare conviction

that it is, generally speaking, deadly poison may prevent our desiring it; but nothing less than humble love filling the heart will prevent our being pleased with it; for the sense of honor is as natural to man as the sense of tasting or feeling. But when that which is spiritual is fully come this which is corruptly natural shall be done away.

Whatever enemies you have, it is enough that you have a Friend who is mightier than them all. O let him reign in your heart alone! Do not spare to speak with all freedom to, dear Miss Furly,

Your affectionate brother and servant.

*To Miss Furly.*

## IV.

### "POWERFUL ADVOCATES FOR CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD."

[He opens the way to a more joyful life. She speaks freely of the pleasure that comes from the praise of others. In this and the following letter he gently warns her not to hear others too much, as she is easily "influenced by fair words."]

*June* 18, 1757.

I AM the more jealous over you because I know you are liable to be much influenced by fair words, especially when they are spoken by persons of sense, and in an agree-

able manner. And flesh and blood are powerful advocates for conformity to the world, particularly in little things. But, blessed be God, we have an unction from the Holy One, ready to teach us of all things. O let us attend to this inward teaching, which, indeed, is always consonant with the word. Then the word, applied by the Spirit, shall be a light in all our ways and a lamp in all our paths.

Fight on and conquer! Change of place, as you observe, is but a little thing. But God has, in some measure, changed your heart, wherein you have great reason to rejoice. And, having received the first fruits of the Spirit, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, patiently and earnestly wait for the great change, whereby every root of bitterness may be torn up.

*To Miss Furly.*

## V.

### "A FRESH DISCOVERY OF THE LOVE OF GOD."

YORK, *July* 1, 1757.

DEAR MISS FURLY: I cannot write to you now so fully as I would, but I send a few lines. Mere temptation certainly does not weaken without yielding to temptation. Yet a heaviness and soreness may remain

upon the spirit till there is a fresh discovery of the love of God.

A jealous fear of offending God is good. But what have you to do with any other fear? Let love cast it all out, and at the same time make you tenfold more afraid of doing anything, small or great, which you cannot offer up as a holy sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

All who are without this fear (and much more all who call it legal, who revile the precious gift of God, and think it a hindrance to "the growing up in Christ") are Antinomians in the inmost soul. Come not into their secret, my dear Miss Furly, but pray for more and more of that "legal spirit," and you will more and more rejoice.

*To Miss Furly.*

## VI.

### "A MEANS OF LESSENING YOUR BURDEN."

[She is afraid that she has offended him by writing so freely. He urges a full expression of her religious desires. She wants to know if many are made perfect in love until a little before death.]

TREMENEARE, *September* 6, 1757.

WHY you should be afraid, on account of anything you said to me, I do not know. Certainly if you had said whatever was in

your heart it might have been a means of lessening your burden and not of increasing it. I believe you often have a desire, and almost a resolution, of saying a great deal to me; but when you come to write or speak your heart fails. Why should it? Why should you repress yourself? I should not despise but love you for your openness. It is the fruit and proof of an honest heart. I know you are weak; I know a little of your particular weakness. But so much the more am I concerned for you, as a tender, sickly flower.

Away then with this reserve; it answers no end but to trouble and embarrass you. Tell me, freely and plainly, any difficulty you meet with, any enemy against whom you want help. Use me as a friend, as I hope you will use Sister Crosby, and you will find it a blessing to your soul. It will again bring the promise of holiness near, which indeed always seems to be far off when we give way to any known sin, when we any way grieve the Spirit of God. There may be some rare cases wherein God has determined not to bestow his perfect love till a little before death; but this I believe is uncommon; he does not usually put off the fulfilling of his promises.

Seek, and you shall find; seek earnestly, and you shall find speedily. Lift up the hands that hang down; deny yourself; take up your cross, whether that of meeting your class or any other. Fight on, and victory is at hand!

*To Miss Furly.*

## VII.

### "GENUINE GRACE, UNMIXED WITH PAINT."

[He again opens the way for free writing. She often walks thorny paths; has difficulty about private prayer, which proves a cross to her.]

ST. AUSTLE, CORNWALL, *September* 25, 1757.

MY DEAR SISTER: It is a rule with me to take nothing ill that is well meant; therefore you have no need ever to be afraid of my putting an ill construction on anything you say; for I know you mean only to save your soul. In most genteel religious people there is so strange a mixture that I have seldom much confidence in them. I love the poor; in many of them I find pure, genuine grace, unmixed with paint, folly, and affectation. But I think Mrs. Gaussen is upright of heart; and perhaps you may find one or two gentle-women like her.

It is plain God sees it best for you frequently

to walk in a thorny path. By this means he aims at destroying your pride of heart and breaking your stubborn will. You have had large experience that there is no substantial or lasting happiness but in him. O be true to yourself and to your own experience! Do not seek it where it cannot be found. Hew out to yourself no more broken cisterns, but let all the springs of your happiness be in him.

You cannot be too careful to keep out of the way of anything that has been the occasion of sin. And it is very possible to show civility and moderate respect to any person without coming in the way of danger. All private conversation may be avoided, and ought to be, at all hazards. Do not run yourself into temptation, and God will deliver you from evil.

Nature and the devil will always oppose private prayer; but it is worth while to break through. That it is a cross will not hinder its being a blessing; nay, often the more reluctance, the greater blessing.

*To Miss Furly.*

## VIII.

### "GOD WILL DO HIS OWN WORK IN HIS OWN MANNER."

[She is troubled because her experience is not as that of others. The darkness brought sorrow, and she would know the reason. Some have spoken "rough" words. She had prayed.]

BRISTOL, *October* 21, 1757.

MY DEAR SISTER: God will do his own work in his own manner, and it matters not whether it be wrought in a more pleasing or painful manner, so it is wrought; so nature is subdued, pride and self-will dethroned, and the will of God done in us and by us. Therefore trouble not yourself about the experience of others; God knows you, and let him do with you as he sees best.

I judge your late distress to be partly the effect of disease, but chiefly preternatural. In the third Journal, there is a case nearly parallel, only the symptoms were more severe. For, in a moment, Lucretia Smith felt such a cloud spread over her that she could not believe there was a God or an after state. You did right to pray, as you could pray; and this is the best method which can be taken in heaviness or darkness of any kind. Then, if sin be the cause, it will be discovered. But take

care that you do not refuse any help; even rough speakers may be of service. Only spread what they say before the Lord, and he will turn it to good.

*To Miss Furly.*

## IX.

### "THAT FRESH EVIDENCE OF PARDON."

LEWISHAM, *February* 9, 1758.

UNDOUBTEDLY you may arise now and receive power from on high. You are hindered chiefly by not understanding the freeness of the gift of God. You are perpetually seeking for something in yourself to move him to love and bless you. But it is not to be found there; it is in himself and in the Son of his love. He did then give you a proof of this, in that fresh evidence of pardon; and he is ready to give it you again to-day; for he is not weary of well-doing. But even after this you may or you may not use the power which attends that peace. And if you ask for more power it shall be given you; for you have an Advocate with the Father. O cast yourself upon him; learn more of that lesson:

Thy salvation to obtain,
Out of myself I go:
Freely thou must heal my pain,
Thy unbought mercy show.

How much of it you may find in this hour! Look up, and see redemption near!

*To Miss Furly.*

## X.

### "DIFFICULT TO RESIST HURTFUL DESIRE."

[Trifling conversation causes her to become discouraged, and she is ready to yield. The cross is heavy and she shrinks from it.]

DUBLIN, *April* 13, 1758.

IT seems best for you to have frequent returns of weakness; it may be needful to fix seriousness upon your spirit, by a lasting impression, that there is but one step between you and eternity. But sickness alone will not do this; no, nor even the near approach of death. Unless the Spirit of God sanctify both, a man may laugh and trifle with his last breath.

You will overcome trifling conversation and the fear of man, not by yielding, but by fighting. This is a cross which you cannot be excused from taking up; bear it, and it will bear you. By prayer you will receive power so to do, to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. But it is more difficult to resist hurtful desire; I am most afraid you should give way to this. Herein you have need of all the power of God. O stand fast! Look up, and receive strength! I shall be glad to hear that you are more than conqueror,

and that you daily grow in the vital knowledge of Christ. Peace be with your spirit!

*To Miss Furly.*

## XI.

### "HEALTH YOU SHALL HAVE, IF HEALTH BE BEST."

*December* 28, 1758.

MY DEAR SISTER: I thought it long since I heard from you, but I imputed it to your illness. And I did not desire you should do anything which would put you to pain or increase your bodily weakness.

When you seemed confident of receiving the promise in a few days I did not judge it needful to say anything to the contrary, both because I was persuaded that expectation would be a quickening to your soul and because I knew you had one near you who was able to advise you in any emergency. See that your desires do not cool, and you shall not be ashamed of this confident expectation. So long as it is tempered with resignation it can do you no disservice. And what else is there worthy of a desire? Health you shall have, if health be best, even bodily health. But what is that in comparison of a healthful mind? And this you are sure to have.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XII.

### "AVOID DISPUTES ABOUT HOLINESS."

[For a year and a half no letters are preserved. She has not yet found "perfect love." The difficulty may be "disputes about holiness." What can she do?]

ATHLONE, *June* 1, 1760.

MY DEAR SISTER: I am persuaded it is not a little thing which will make me angry at you. I hope your thinking evil of me would not, for you may have many reasons so to do.

Try: perhaps by prayer and a little resolution you may avoid hearing those disputes about holiness. It implies no more than this: if John Jones, or any other, begins a discourse concerning the errors or sins of absent persons tell him, "I beg you would say no more on this head; I dare not, and I will not, hear, unless those persons were present." If one begins any caution of that kind, stop him, only with mildness and good humor; say, "I believe you speak out of kindness, but I must not hear; it both distresses and hurts my soul; therefore, if you really wish my welfare, be silent, or let us call another cause." Where you see good you may add, "I consulted Mr. Wes-

ley on this head, and this was the advice he gave me."

No one ever "walked in the light as God is in the light" (I mean, in the full sense of the expression) till "the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed him from all sin." "If we are perfectly saved it is through his blood." This is the plain meaning of the text, and it may be fulfilled in you before you sleep. God is sovereign in sanctifying as well as justifying. He will act when as well as how he pleases, and none can say unto him, "What doest thou?"

*To Miss Furly.*

## XIII.

### "HE IS STEERING YOU TO THE HAVEN."

NORWICH, *January* 18, 1761.

MY DEAR SISTER: I have sometimes wondered that not one of all the clergymen we have known should ever cleave to me for God's sake; nor one man of learning, which would ease me exceedingly. Tommy Walsh designed it,

> But death had quicker wings than love.

Perhaps it was not best, because I am so immeasurably apt to pour out all my soul into any that love me.

It is well for Sister Clarke that she is landed safe. And it is well for us, who are still amidst the waves, that He is with us whom the winds and the seas obey. He is steering you to the haven, where you would be. You may well trust your soul with him and let him do with you as seemeth him good.

Certainly nothing can be of greater importance than the behavior both of those who are renewed and of those who are known to be pressing after it. You have need to weigh every step you take. When and where do you meet now? And who are they that meet?

*To Miss Furly.*

## XIV.

### "THE PERFECTION I BELIEVE AND TEACH."

[A friend advises that she is not to expect much till death. She affirms that great blessings have been received. How does he mark out "sanctification?" Will it exclude mistakes? Can an invalid girl receive the full blessing of perfection?]

ST. IVES, *September* 15, 1762.

MY DEAR SISTER: Whereunto you have attained, hold fast. But expect that greater things are at hand, although our friend talks as if you were not to expect them till the article of death.

Certainly sanctification (in the proper sense) is "an instantaneous deliverance from all sin," and includes "an instantaneous power then given, always to cleave to God." Yet this sanctification (at least in the lower degrees) does not include a power never to think a useless thought nor ever speak a useless word. I myself believe that such a perfection is inconsistent with living in a corruptible body, for this makes it impossible "always to think right." While we breathe we shall, more or less, mistake. If, therefore, Christian perfection implies this, we must not expect it till after death.

I want you to be all love. This is the perfection I believe and teach. And this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders, which that high-strained perfection is not. Indeed, my judgment is that (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo, and that to set perfection too high (so high as no man that we ever heard or read of attained) is the most effectual (because unsuspected) way of driving it out of the world.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XV.

### ON MARRIAGE.

[She asks three questions relating to married life. Her confidence in Mr. Wesley is so strong that she mentions her lover's name. She never married; probably ill health prevented.]

LONDON, *July* 16, 1763.

MY DEAR SISTER: 1. So far as I know what will make me most holy and most useful I know what is the will of God.

2. Certainly it is possible for persons to be as devoted to God in a married as in a single state.

3. I believe John Downes is thoroughly desirous of being wholly devoted to God, and that, if you alter your condition at all, you cannot choose a more proper person.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XVI.

### SALVATION FROM SIN.

LEWISHAM, *December* 15, 1763.

MY DEAR SISTER: It has seemed to me for some time that God will not suffer Cornelius Bastable to live at Cork. He may starve there, but he cannot live. The people are not worthy of him.

Salvation from sin is a deeper and higher work than either you or S. Ryan can con-

ceive. But do not imagine (as we are continually prone to do) that it lies in an indivisible point. You experienced a taste of it when you were justified; you since experienced the thing itself, only in a low degree, and God gave you his Spirit that you might know the things which he had freely given you. Hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. You are continually apt to throw away what you have for what you want. However, you are right in looking for a farther instantaneous change as well as a constant gradual one. But it is not good for you to be quite alone; you should converse frequently as well as freely with Miss Johnson and any other that is much alive.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XVII.

### CONCERNING GIVING.

[She questions him concerning *giving*. It seems to disturb her that she must give attention to the mammon of unrighteousness. She has come for advice to the best example of systematic giving since the days of the apostles.]

EDINBURGH, *May* 28, 1764.

MY DEAR SISTER: Certainly it would be right to spend some time in setting down both the outward providences of God

and the inward leadings and workings of his Spirit as far as you can remember them. But observe withal you are called to be a good steward of the mammon of unrighteousness. You must therefore think of this, too, in its place only without anxiety, otherwise that neglect of your calling will hinder the work of God in your heart. You are not serving mammon by this, but serving Christ; it is part of the task which he has assigned you. Yet it is true your heart is to be free all the time; and see that you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XVIII.

### "USE ALL THE ABILITY GOD GIVETH."

LONDON, *August* 2, 1776.

MY DEAR SISTER: I know not that you differ from me at all. You are certainly in your place at present, and it seems one providential reason of your ill health was to drive you thither. Now use all the ability which God giveth, and he will give more. Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; it is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich. If you can persuade honest Alice Brammah to be cleanly as

well as gentle she will be tenfold more useful, and so will Billy Brammah if he will be teachable and advisable; otherwise there is a fly in the pot of ointment. You are sent to Leeds chiefly for the sake of those that enjoy or thirst after perfect love. Redeem the time! Go on in His name! And let the world and the devil fall under your feet.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XIX.

### ON WOMEN AS CLASS LEADERS.

[Miss Furly had for many years acted as leader of a class of women. She asks if it will be improper to lead a class of men. This answer has a peculiar interest in our day.]

*October*, 1776.

MY DEAR SISTER: You have abundant reason to praise God, who has dealt so mercifully with you, and to encourage all about you never to rest till they attain full salvation.

As to the question you propose, if the leader himself desires it, and the class be not unwilling, in that case there can be no objection to your meeting a class even of men. This is not properly assuming or exercising any authority over them. You do not act as a su-

perior, but an equal, and it is an act of friendship and brotherly love.

I am glad you had a little conversation with Miss Ritchie. She is a precious soul. Do her all the good you can, and incite her to exert all the talents which God has given her.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XX.

### "NEVER SO BUSY AS TO FORGET MY FRIENDS."

LONDON, *December* 1, 1781.

MY DEAR SISTER: Never be afraid that I should think your letters troublesome; I am never so busy as to forget my friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher made an excellent beginning, and I trust they will increase with all the increase of God. Now, let all of you that remain in the neighborhood arise up and supply her lack of service. Be instant in season out of season; that all may know you have caught her mantle!

But pray do not suffer my poor Miss Ritchie to work herself to death. Let her do all she can, and not more than she can.

*To Miss Furly.*

## XXI.

### "WEAKNESS OF NERVES CANNOT PREVENT JOY IN THE LORD."

[This is the last letter to Miss Furly, as far as we know. Healthy man as Mr. Wesley is, he can sympathize with an invalid. With all her sickness, Miss Furly found at last that "perfect love," with its joy, for which she sought so long and earnestly.]

NEAR LONDON, *November* 21, 1783.

MY DEAR SISTER: Through the blessing of God I find no difference at all between the health and strength which are now given me and that which I had forty years ago. Only I had then many pains which I have not now.

You are enabled to give a very clear and standing proof that weakness of nerves cannot prevent joy in the Lord. Your nerves have been remarkably weak, and that for many years; but still your soul can magnify the Lord and your spirit rejoice in God your Saviour!

*To Miss Furly.*

## XXII.

### "BE ANYTHING BUT A TRIFLER."

[The two earnest letters (XXII and XXIII) to this unknown young woman brought a reply that must have given Mr. Wesley great joy. They are noticeable for two hings: first, that he sought the conversion of persons to

God, and not to his own private opinions. He opened the way to any outward profession, if only the heart was right with God. Second, he gave the model of how to reprove or warn.]

*February* 21, 1759.

PROBABLY, Miss ——, this may be the last trouble of the kind which you will receive from me. Therefore you may forgive me this, and the rather when you consider my motives to it. You know I can have no temporal view; I can have none but a faint, distant hope (because with God all things are possible) of doing some service to one whom I love. And this may answer the question which you might naturally ask, "What would you have? What do you want with me?" I want you not to be a convert to my opinions, but to be a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of his kingdom. Be anything, as to outward profession, so you are lowly in heart; so you resist and conquer every motion of pride, and have that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Be what you please besides; only be meek and gentle, and in patience possess your soul; so that one may truly say to you,

"Calm thou ever art within,
All unruffled, all serene."

Hear what preacher you will, but hear the voice of God, and beware of prejudice and

every unkind temper; beware of foolish and hurtful desires, or they will pierce you through with many sorrows. In one word, be anything but a trifler, a trifler with God and your own soul. It was not for this that God gave you

"A mind superior to the vulgar herd."

No, Miss ——, no! but that you might employ all your talents to the glory of Him that gave them. O, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God! Is he not still striving with you? striving to make you, not almost, but altogether, a Christian? Indeed, you must be all or nothing; a saint or a devil, eminent in sin or holiness! The good Lord deliver you from every snare, and guide your feet in the way of peace! How great a pleasure would this give to all your real friends, and in particular to

Your affectionate servant for Christ's sake.

*To Miss* ——.

## XXIII.

### DANGERS OF A LARGE FORTUNE.

COLCHESTER, *March* 20, 1759.

MY wife, Miss ——, surprised me last night by informing me you are left mistress of a large fortune. Shall I say, agreeably surprised me? I cannot tell, because I believe there is

another world, and I do not know what influence this change may have on your condition. Therefore I am in fear and in hope. You may be hereby far more happy, or far more miserable, in eternity! O, make a stand! Consider the situation you are in; perhaps never before were you in so great danger. You know a little of your natural tempers; now you have means of indulging, and thereby inflaming, them to the uttermost. And how many will incite you so to do! How few will dare to warn you against it! Now what food will you have for pride! what infinite temptations to think more highly than you ought to think! You do so already. But O, where will you stop? The good Lord arrest the storm in mid-career! How impetuously now, unless God interpose, must self-will whirl you along! How deeply, unless he help, will you shortly be immersed in practical atheism! as ten thousand things will concur to drive God out of your thoughts, as much as if he were not in the world. But, above all, how will you escape from being swallowed up in idolatry? love of the world, such as you never knew before?

Hitherto you have been greatly superior to every delicacy in food; but even this may assault you now, and perhaps raise in you other

desires which you are now a stranger to. At present, you are above the follies of dress; but will you be so a twelvemonth hence? May you not easily slide into the pride of life, in this as well as other instances? especially considering how your vanity will be gratified thereby? For who will not admire and applaud your admirable taste? It will only remain for you to marry some agreeable person, that has much wit and sense, with little or no religion; then it is finished! Either you will be thoroughly miserable in this world or miserable to eternity.

"But what business is this of yours? Cannot you let me alone? What have I to do with you?" Believe me, I could very easily let you alone if I had not a real and tender good will toward you, and if I did not know (what perhaps you do not) that you have need even of me. You want friends who understand you well, and who dare tell you the whole, plain truth; and yet not in a surly, imperious manner, for then you could not receive it. I have endeavored to do this once more. Will not you forgive me? I cannot but think, if you do not thank you will at least excuse

Your affectionate servant.

*To Miss ——.*

## XXIV.

### "INVOLUNTARY DEFECTS DO NOT IMPLY DEFECTS OF LOVE."

[No other theme interests Mr. Wesley's young correspondents so much as "Christian perfection." Miss Hardy wants the subject outlined; and asks if there are living witnesses. She inquires about "defects." "Are they all love while they grieve the Holy Spirit?"]

*December* 26, 1761.

DEAR SISTER: The path of controversy is a rough path. But it seems smoother while I am walking with you, so that I could follow you through all its windings; only my time will not permit.

The plain fact is this: I know many who love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. He is their one desire, their one delight, and they are continually happy in him. They love their neighbor as themselves. They feel as sincere, fervent, constant a desire for the happiness of every man, good or bad, friend or enemy, as for their own. They "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." Their souls are continually streaming up to God in holy joy, prayer, and praise. This is plain, sound,

scriptural experience; and of this we have more and more living witnesses.

But these souls dwell in a shattered, corruptible body, and are so pressed down thereby that they cannot exert their love as they would, by always thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs they sometimes inevitably think, speak, or act wrong. Yet I think they need the advocacy of Christ, even for these involuntary defects, although they do not imply a defect of love, but of understanding. However that be, I cannot doubt the fact. They are all love; yet they cannot walk as they desire. "But are they all love while they grieve the Holy Spirit?" No, surely; they are then fallen from their steadfastness; and this they may do even after they are sealed. So that even to such strong cautions are needful. After the heart is cleansed from pride, anger, and desire it may suffer them to reenter; therefore I have long thought some expressions in the hymns are abundantly too strong, as I cannot perceive any state mentioned in Scripture from which we may not (in a measure, at least) fall.

Persons who talked of being emptied before they were filled were, for some time, a great

stumbling-block to me too; but I have since considered it thus: The great point in question is, Can we be saved from all sin, or not? Now, it may please God to act in that uncommon manner purposely to clear this point; to satisfy those persons that they are saved from all sin before he goes on in his work.

Forgive me, dear Miss Hardy, that I do but just touch upon the heads of your letter. Indeed, this defect does not spring from the want of love, but only from want of time. I should not wonder if your soul was one of the next that was filled with pure love. Receive it freely, thou poor bruised reed! It is able to make thee stand.

*To Miss Elizabeth Hardy.*

## XXV.

### "ONE BRANCH OF CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY."

[Nearly three years elapse between this and preceding letter. The theme is still perfection. If she ever enjoyed it she has now lost it. She is perplexed, and leans more to her understanding than to faith.]

BRISTOL, *September* 29, 1764.

DEAR SISTER: In the "Thoughts upon Christian Perfection" you have a clear and consistent account of it. I have been grieved at the danger I saw you in of stopping

short of it. Certainly you may attain that blessing soon. And I am thoroughly persuaded you did taste of it, though how you lost it I know not.

It will be eternally true, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Have this faith, and you have salvation. And this is the very thing you want. When this is joined with a strong understanding it is well; but it may exist with a very weak one. This is the case with Mrs. W——, whose understanding is extremely weak; and yet she has strong faith, and such as exceedingly profits me; though I take knowledge that the treasure is in an earthen vessel. I see all that is of nature; but this does not hinder my rejoicing in that which is of grace. This is one branch of Christian simplicity. While reason, assisted from above, enables me to discern the precious from the vile, I make my full use of the former without losing one moment in thinking upon the latter. Perhaps reason enlightened makes me simple. If I knew less of human nature (forgive me for talking so much of myself) I should be more apt to stumble at the weaknesses of it; and if I have (by nature or by grace) some clearness of apprehension it is owing to this (under God), that I never

staggered at all the reveries of George Bell. I saw instantly at the beginning, and from the beginning, what was right and what was wrong. But I saw withal, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." Hence many imagined I was imposed upon, and applauded themselves for their greater perspicuity, as they do at this day. "But if you knew it," says his friend to George Lopez, "why did you not tell me?" I answer with him, "I do not speak all I know, but all I judge needful." Still I am persuaded there is no state under heaven from which it is not possible to fall. But I wish you were all love, and then you would not need take any thought for the morrow.

*To Miss Elizabeth Hardy.*

## XXVI.

### "IN PEACE AND LOVE WAIT FOR THE WHOLE PROMISE."

[This young woman asks for advice that will bring her more happiness in God and a better understanding of the word of God.]

LONDON, *August* 21, 1766.

DEAR MISS A——: Your letters will always be agreeable to me; and the more largely and freely you write the better. I am deeply concerned for your happiness; and a

measure of happiness you may enjoy as long as you feel any love in your heart to God, though it be but in a small degree. Be thankful for what you have, and in peace and love wait for the whole promise. God has not only promised, but confirmed that promise by an oath, that, "being delivered from all your enemies, you shall serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of your life." By what art can this be made to mean the last day or the last moment of your life? Look for it now! To-day hear his voice. Do not reason against God, against yourself. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

I advise you, 1. Get all the opportunities you can of hearing the preaching and conversing with the children of God. 2. Avoid disputing with your might. 3. Spend some time every day in private prayer, in meditation, and in reading the Notes on the New Testament, the first volume of Sermons and the Appeals. 4. When you may be free, use it rather. Peace be with your spirit!

*To Miss A——.*

## XXVII.

### "EVERY REASONABLE AFFECTION INTENDED TO LAST TO ETERNITY."

LONDON, *January* 15, 1767.

DEAR MISS A——: Time changes thought, especially in youth, and amid variety of company; so that it would be nothing strange if you should forget those for whom you once had a regard; but you need not. Every reasonable affection is intended to last to eternity. And the true affection for our friends is, as Milton says,

> "A scale
> Whereby to heavenly love thou mayest ascend."

For the present you seem to be in your place, the place which the wisdom of God has assigned you; and the crosses you now meet with, as they are not of your own choosing, will surely work together for good. Your want of more public opportunities may, in a good measure, be supplied by private exercises. Let no day pass without more or less private prayer, reading, and meditation. And does not God see in secret? Does he not now read your heart and see if it pants for his pure

love? If so, are not all things ready? May you not now find what you never did before? Ask Him that loves you, whose nature and whose name is Love!

*To Miss A——.*

## XXVIII.

### "WHAT IS BEST FOR ETERNITY?"

["What is best for eternity?" She asks this question before deciding whether to remain single or to be married.]

LONDONDERRY, *April* 20, 1767.

DEAR SISTER: Certainly the point we should always have in view is, What is best for eternity? And I believe it would be best for you to change your condition if a proper person offers. But I should scruple doing this without a parent's consent. If your mother is willing I see no objection to your marrying one that fears God, and is seeking salvation through Christ. Such a one is not an unbeliever in the sense wherein that word is taken in 2 Cor. vi, 14.

I love to think of you and hear from you. I want you to be always holy and happy. And why not? You have a strong Helper; and shall not his strength be made perfect in

your weakness? Why then should you stop short of his whole promise? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Hold him to his word, and let not your hope be weakened by the subtile reasonings of men.

*To Miss A——.*

## XXIX.

### "SPEAK AS WELL AS YOU CAN FOR GOD."

[Ought we to speak for God when we do not feel the power of the truths ourselves? Many have asked this question besides Nancy A.]

NEWCASTLE, *August* 8, 1767.

DEAR SISTER: We have many instances of this. Persons cold and dull, and scarce knowing how to believe their own words, have asserted, as they could, the truths of the Gospel, and enforced them upon others, and at that very time God has caused light and love to spring up in their own hearts. Therefore, however you feel it in your own breast, speak as well as you can for God. Many times you will see some fruit upon others; if not, you shall have a recompense in your own bosom. In one sense you do believe that God is both able and willing to cleanse you from all unrighteousness, and to do it now; but not in

that sense wherein all things are possible to him that believeth. But what if he should give you this faith also—yea, while you have this paper in your hand! To-day hear his voice. O listen, and heaven springs up in your heart!

*To Miss A——.*

## XXX.

### "THE SECRET OF HEART RELIGION."

*October* 14, 1767.

DEAR SISTER: Grow in grace every hour, the more the better. Use now all the grace you have; this is certainly right; but also now expect all the grace you want. This is the secret of heart religion: at the present moment to work and to believe. Here is Christ your Lord, the lover of your soul. Give yourself up to him without delay and as you can, without reserve, and simply tell him all you desire and all you want. What situation is it that hurries you? Is it not determined whether you shall change your condition or no? Be it either way, God sitteth on the throne and ruleth all things well.

*To Miss A——.*

## XXXI.

### TWO GOOD RULES.

[The time for marriage draws near, and in answer to her request Mr. Wesley gives two rules which should prove of service in many other conditions of life.]

NORWICH, *November* 2, 1767.

MY DEAR SISTER: In the way of life you are entering upon you will have need of great resolution and steadiness. It will be your wisdom to set out with two rules, and invariably adhere to them: 1. "I will do everything I can to oblige you, except what I cannot do with a clear conscience." 2. "I will refrain from everything I can that would displease you except what I cannot refrain from with a clear conscience." Keep to this on both sides from the hour you meet, and your meeting will be a blessing. You will do well likewise constantly to pray with as well as for one another.

Now, Nancy, put on, by the grace of God, the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. Beware of foolish desires! Beware of inordinate affections! Beware of worldly cares! But, above all, I think you should beware of wasting time in what is called innocent trifling. And watch against unprofitable conversation, particularly between

yourselves. Then your union may be (as it ought) a type of the union between Christ and his Church, and you may in the end present each other before him holy and unblamable at his coming.

*To Miss A——.*

## XXXII.

### "DO YOU FIND NO DECAY IN FAITH?"

[Miss Pywell does not write often. She lives a spiritual life. The following letter was not answered for nearly nine months (January 17, 1772), but the reply is satisfactory, as you will note: "You ask if I find any decay in faith. I answer, No. I rather find that my faith is strengthened daily and hourly. My constant prayer is, 'Lord, increase my faith,' and thereby enlarge my heart to love thee more and more. My hopes are more firm and lively than ever. I feel nothing contrary to pure love."]

KILKENNY, *April* 23, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER: I hardly knew whether you were dead or alive, having not heard from you for so long a season. Yesterday I received yours of March 28, and am glad to hear you are not moved from your steadfastness. Certainly it is not the will of our Lord that you should: his gifts are without repentance. Do you find no decay in faith? Do you as clearly as ever see Him who is invisible? Is your hope as lively as at

first? Do you still taste of the powers of the world to come? And can you say in as strong a sense as ever,

"I nothing want beneath, above,
Happy in a Saviour's love?"

Do you feel no anger at any time, no pride, no will but what is subordinate to the will of God, and have you the witness in yourself that your ways please him? Then expect to see greater things than these, for there is no end of his goodness.

*To Miss Pywell.*

## XXXIII.

### "ARE YOU ALWAYS SENSIBLE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD?"

[Miss Pywell must have lived a beautiful life, if we may judge from her answers to Mr. Wesley. Read his letter, then read her reply, herewith given: "I am always sensible of the presence of God, which is never interrupted by company or hurry of business. I never fret at anything so as to interrupt my happiness. Sometimes I find lowness of spirits, which I think came first upon me by grief, occasioned by a brother and a sister leaving the good ways of God."]

LONDON, *January* 22, 1772.

MY DEAR SISTER: You have given me clear and satisfactory answers to the questions which I proposed, and I rejoice over you

for the grace of God which is in you. May he increase it more and more! How should I rejoice to see you, and to talk with you more particularly on these subjects! I hope that may be in the spring; but before then you can tell me whether you are always sensible of the presence of God! Is that sense never interrupted by company or by hurry of business? Is your heart lifted up to God, whatever your hands are employed in? Do you rejoice evermore? Are you always happy? always more or less enjoying God? Do you never fret, never so grieve at anything as to interrupt your happiness? Do you never find lowness of spirits? Are you enabled in everything to give thanks?

*To Miss Pywell.*

## XXXIV.

### ON PAST TRIALS.

LONDON, *December* 29, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER: I am glad you parted from our honest friend C—ne upon so good terms. All the trials you suffered while you were there are now passed away like a dream. So are all the afflictions we endured yesterday; but they are noted in God's book, and the happy fruit of them may

remain when heaven and earth are passed away. Trials you are likewise to expect where you are now; for you are still in the body, and wrestle, if not with flesh and blood, yet with "principalities, and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with wicked spirits in high places;" and it is good for you that every grain of your faith should be tried; afterward you shall come forth as gold. See that you never be weary or faint in your mind; account all these things for your profit, that you may be a full partaker of his holiness, and

Brighter in all his image shine.

*To Miss Pywell.*

## XXXV.

### "BE ALL HIS, AND ADMIT NO RIVAL INTO YOUR HEART."

[The correspondence with Miss Jane Hilton continued for twenty years. Mr. Wesley was a frequent visitor at her father's house, preaching in Mr. Hilton's yard, near the great street in Beverley. In 1773 we find letters addressed to the young lady as "Mrs. Jane Barton." Only letters written before the marriage are given below.]

YORK, *July* 22, 1766.

MY DEAR SISTER: See that you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. You need never more be en-

tangled either with pride or anger or desire of any creature. Christ is yours; all is yours. O be all his, and admit no rival into your heart! But, above all, beware of unbelief. Beware of the reasoning devil. In every cloud or shadow of doubt look up, and help, while yet you ask, is given. All you want is ready! Only believe!

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XXXVI.

### "SEE THAT YOU DO NOT FALL INTO EVIL REASONINGS."

[Note in the following letters the questions leading to salvation. She lost her peace once through evil reasonings. He kindly points the error and opens the way of escape.]

YORK, *June* 25, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER: Your conversation gave me much satisfaction. I rejoiced to find that you were sensible of your loss, and determined, by the grace to God, never to rest till you had recovered all which you once enjoyed. Nay, and you will recover it with increase; you will find a deeper communion with God and a more full self-devotion than ever. An earnest of this was given you the other day. Hold *that* fast, and continually expect the rest. How did you find

yourself on Thursday morning? Had you not again a taste of the great salvation? And how have you been since? Are you still happy in God, and resolved not to rest till you are all devoted to him? See that you do not fall again into evil reasonings! Be simple before God. Continue instant in prayer, and watch against whatever you know, by experience, to be a weight upon your mind. How soon may you then have your whole desire! How soon may your heart be all love! Why not now? All things are ready; only believe!

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XXXVII.

### "LEAN YOUR WHOLE SOUL UPON HIM."

GUISELEY, *July* 1, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER: You must now expect temptations. Perhaps they will assault you on every side; for all the powers of hell are enraged at you, and will use every art to move you from your steadfastness. But He that is for you is greater than all that are against you; only beware of evil reasoning! Hang simply on him that loves you, and whom you love, just as a little helpless child. Christ is yours, all yours; that is enough. Lean

your whole soul upon him! Do you find a witness in yourself that he has cleansed your heart? Do you feel this always? And have you a constant sense of the loving presence of God? You never need lose anything that God has given, so you keep close to him. Be little and mean in your own eyes, glorying only in the Lord.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XXXVIII.

### "THERE IS NO END OF HIS GOODNESS."

EPWORTH, *July* 13, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER: Coming here this afternoon I found your welcome letter; I would have you write as often as you can. for you have need of every possible help, inasmuch as your grace is as yet young and tender and all the powers of darkness are at work to move you from your steadfastness. But it is enough that Christ is yours, and he is wiser and stronger than all the powers of hell. Hang upon him, and you are safe; lean on him with the whole weight of your soul. Do you find now as clear an evidence of the invisible as of the visible world? And are your thoughts continually fixed on the God of your salvation? Do you pray without

ceasing? Does he preserve you even in your dreams? Hold fast what you have, and look for more; for there is no end of his goodness.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XXXIX.

### "I AM NOT SORRY THAT YOU HAVE TRIALS."

BRISTOL, *August* 20, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER: I write often because I know you are yet weak and tender and in need of every help. I am not sorry that you have trials; they are intended to show you your own helplessness and to give you a fuller confidence in Him who has all power in heaven and earth. You have reason to cast all your care upon him, for he has dealt bountifully with you. When any trial comes see that you do not look to the thing itself, but immediately look unto Jesus. Reason not upon it, but believe. See the hand of God in Shimei's tongue. If you want advice on any point write to me without delay. And, meantime, stay your whole soul upon Him who will never leave you nor forsake you. Tell him simply all you fear, all you feel, all you want. Pour out your soul into his bosom. Do you feel no pride, no anger, no desire? You will feel temptations to all, and the old deceiver will

tell you again and again, "That is pride, that is anger!" But regard him not. And cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XL.

### "IS THE PERSON A BELIEVER?"

[In this and the following letter we have Mr. Wesley's searching questions concerning Miss Hilton's lover. He spoke not until advice was asked. He is practical in his inquiry, "Is he able to keep you?"]

BRISTOL, *September* 30, 1768.

YOU, as it were, ask my advice. But I know nothing of the matter; you should have spoken to me when I saw you. Is the person a believer? Is he a Methodist? Is he a member of our society? Is he clear with regard to the doctrine of perfection? Is he athirst for it? If he fails in any of these particulars I fear he would be a hindrance to you rather than a help. Was not inordinate affection for him one cause of your losing the pure love of God before? If it was you have a great reason to be afraid lest it should again rob you of that pearl. Has it not already? Have you all the life you had two months ago? Is your soul still all love?

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLI.

### "IS HE ABLE TO KEEP YOU?"

BRISTOL, *October* 8, 1768.

MY DEAR SISTER: You need never be afraid "of wearying my patience," unless it be by your silence. There is no danger of your writing too often. I can easily believe the description you give is just; therefore there are only two particulars remaining: First, Have you both the consent of your parents? Without this there is seldom a blessing. Secondly, Is he able to keep you? I mean, in such a manner as you have lived hitherto. Otherwise, remember! "When poverty comes in at the door love flies out at the window."

Do you find as much as ever of the spirit of prayer and of continual watchfulness? Are you always sensible of the presence of God? in the greatest hurry of business? Have you power over wandering thoughts?

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLII.

### "THE SECOND DELIVERANCE."

LONDON, *March* 1, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER: I rejoice that I have confidence in you in all things. I believe you do not willingly lose any opportunity of

speaking for a good Master. I apprehend you should particularly encourage the believers to give up all to God, and to expect the power whereby they will be enabled so to do, every day, and every moment. I hope none of your preachers speak against this, but rather press all the people forward.

Do you now feel anything like anger, or pride, or self-will, or any remains of the carnal mind? Was your second deliverance wrought while I was at Beverley? at the time of the sermon, or after it? You did not tell me in what manner you found the change, and whether it has continued without any intermission from that moment. Certainly there never need be any decay. There never will, if you continue watching unto prayer.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLIII.

### "THE DANGER OF WHILING AWAY TIME."

LISBURN, *April* 9, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER: I thank Brother Barton for his letter. Both of you have now more need than ever continually to watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation. There will be a great danger of so cleaving to each other as to forget God, or of being so taken

up with a creature as to abate your hunger and thirst after righteousness. There will be a danger likewise of whiling away time, of not improving it to the uttermost; of spending more of it than needs, in good sort of talk with each other, which yet does not quicken your souls. If you should once get into a habit of this it will be exceeding hard to break it off. Therefore you should now attend to every step you take, that you may begin as you hope to hold on to the end. And beware you are not entangled with worldly care, any more than worldly desire. Be careful for nothing, but in everything make your request known to God, with thanksgiving.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLIV.

### "A DEEPER FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER."

BRISTOL, *September* 9, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER: Now I understand you well, but I did not understand you before; I thought you meant that you had not now the love that you had once. I am glad to find that I was mistaken and that you still retain that precious gift of God. Undoubtedly you may retain it always; yea, and with a continual increase. You may have a deeper and

deeper fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. You may have more and more of the mind which was in him and be more fully renewed in his likeness. You should send me word, from time to time, what your present experience and your present trials are. Peace be with your spirits!

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLV.

### "CONTINUE LIKEWISE TO BE USEFUL IN YOUR GENERATION."

["'Useful in your generation!" With what force do the words of this letter come to young women in this day!]

NORWICH, *November* 1, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER: Have you been tried with bodily weakness or with outward afflictions? If with the latter, have you found a deliverance from them? It is certain, in every temptation He will make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. When you are tempted it is an unspeakable blessing that there is nothing in your heart which joins with the temptation. And there never need be more; the enemy is thrust out, and cannot reenter if you continue to watch and pray. Continue likewise to be useful in your generation. As you have time do good to all men. Snatch all the opportunities you

can of speaking a word to any of your neighbors. Comfort the afflicted, support the weak, exhort the believers to go on unto perfection. Never be weary in welldoing. In due time you shall reap if you faint not.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLVI.

### NEW DANGERS.

LONDON, *December* 24, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER: Some of the trials which you must frequently have are of a delicate nature. You will need much of the wisdom from above, or you would suffer loss under them. Those who are very near to you were (and probably are still) prejudiced against William Fallowfield beyond all sense and reason. And how extremely difficult it is for you not to drink in *a little* of their spirit! Only what is ill-will in them may in you be a simple error of judgment. Yet there is danger lest it should weaken your soul and insensibly lead you to some wrong temper.

I believe you may speak without reserve to Brother Howard. He is a cool, thinking man. But does he preach Christian perfection clearly and explicitly? Which of your other preachers does?

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLVII.

### TWO THINGS ABOUT THE PURE LOVE OF GOD.

[This letter shows the value of Mr. Wesley's correspondence. Questions come in the sphere of the higher Christian life that receive such practical, unmystified answers that the young believer may take heart and "go forward."]

*May* 8, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER: Two things are certain: the one, that it is possible to lose even the pure love of God; the other, that it is not necessary, it is not unavoidable; it may be lost, but it may be kept. Accordingly, we have some in every part of the kingdom who have never been moved from their steadfastness. And from this moment you need never be moved; His grace is sufficient for you. But you must continue to grow if you continue to stand, for no one can stand still. And is it not your Lord's will concerning you that you should daily receive a fresh increase of love? And see that you labor so much the more to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak, to confirm the wavering and recover them that are out of the way.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLVIII.

### PRAYING FOR TEMPORAL THINGS.

[Here we see "growth" in Mr. Wesley—learning to pray for temporal things,]

NORWICH, *November* 5, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER: For many years I had a kind of scruple with regard to praying for temporal things, but three or four years ago I was thoroughly persuaded that scruple was unnecessary. Being then straitened much, I made it a matter of prayer, and I had an immediate answer. It is true, we can only ask outward blessings with reserve: "If this is best; if it be thy will." And in this manner we may certainly plead the promise, "All these things shall be added unto you."

I hope the little debates which were some time since in the society at Beverley are at an end, and that you all now continue in love, and bear one another's burdens. You had for a long time a hard part to act between the contending parties; but as God preserved you from anger and from a party spirit you suffered no loss thereby. Beware of suffering loss from another quarter—from worldly care.

This is a dangerous enemy. You had need steadily to cast your care on Him that careth for you.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## XLIX.

### "A LITTLE THING TO TRUST GOD AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE HIM."

*December* 18, 1772.

MY DEAR SISTER: It is a little thing to trust God as far as we can see him, so far as the way lies open before us; but to trust in him when we are hedged in on every side and can see no way to escape, this is good and acceptable with God. This is the faith of Abraham our father, and, by the grace of God, this is *your* faith.

*To Miss Jane Hilton.*

## L.

### A MEANS OF HOLINESS.

[Most of Mr. Wesley's letters to Miss Bosanquet were concerning "temporal" affairs. We select two that touch the spiritual life. This notable woman, afterward Mrs. John Fletcher, was born in 1739, memorable as the year in which Methodism was cradled. Her father was one of the chief merchants of London. By means of a Methodist servant she found peace with God when she was only eight years old. At the age

of twenty-one she came into possession of a "small fortune," and for the comfort of herself and family, owing to religious differences, she rented rooms in Hoxton Square. Her life is memorable for work and holiness of character. We urge our readers to make her fuller acquaintance.]

LONDON *August* 16, 1767.

MY DEAR SISTER: So the Lord has chastened and corrected you, but he hath not given you over unto death. It is your part to stand ready continually for whatever he shall call you to. Everything is a blessing, a means of holiness, as long as you can clearly say, "Lord, do with me and mine what thou wilt, and when thou wilt, and how thou wilt."

Undoubtedly she was (so was I) in the third stage of a consumption. And physicians have long since agreed that this is not curable by any natural means. But what signifies this in the sight of God? As,

> When obedient Nature knows His will,
> A fly, a grapestone, or a hair can kill;

so, when it is his will to restore life or strength, any means shall be effectual; but we are slow of heart to believe that he is still the uncontrolled Almighty Lord of hell and earth and heaven.

*To Miss Bosanquet.*

## LI.

### "IT CONCERNS US TO FOLLOW OUR OWN LIGHT."

LONDON, *January* 15, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER: It is not strange if the leading of one soul be very different from that of another. The same Spirit worketh in everyone, and yet worketh several ways, according to his own will. It concerns us to follow our own light, seeing we are not to be judged by another's conscience.

*To Miss Bosanquet.*

## LII.

### "DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SIN AND TEMPTATION."

[Two letters to Miss Briggs are worthy of preservation. The following picture from Mr. Wesley's pen lets us see our young friend: "On this day (May 7, 1785) that venerable saint, Mr. Perronet, desires his granddaughter, Miss Briggs, who attended him day and night, to go out into the garden and take a little air. He was reading and hearing her read the last three chapters of Isaiah. When she returned he was in a kind of ecstasy, the tears running down his cheeks, from a deep sense of the glorious things which were shortly to come to pass. He continued unspeakably happy that day, and on Sunday was, if possible, happier still. . . . When he was in bed she went into his room to see if anything was wanting; and as she stood at the foot of the bed he smiled and

broke out, 'God bless thee, my dear child, and all that belong to thee! Yea, he *will* bless thee!' Which he earnestly repeated many times, till she left the room. When she went in the next morning, Monday, May 9, his spirit was returned to God!"]

ATHLONE, *April* 14, 1771.

MY DEAR BETSY: You may be assured that I am always pleased to hear from you, and that I shall never think your letters too long. Always tell me what is in your heart. Otherwise it would hardly be possible to give you the advice you may want from time to time. As soon as you had your armor on it was fit that it should be proved; so God prepared for you the occasions of fighting, that you might conquer and might know both your own weakness and his strength. Each day will bring just temptation enough, and power enough to conquer it; and, as one says, "temptations, with distinct deliverances from them, avail much." The unction of the Holy One is given to believers for this very end, to enable them to distinguish (which otherwise would be impossible) between sin and temptation. And this you will do, not by any general rule, but by listening to him on all particular occasions, and by your consulting with those that have experience in the

ways of God. Undoubtedly both you and Philothea and my dear Miss Perronet are now more particularly called to speak for God. In so doing you must expect to meet with many things which are not pleasing to flesh and blood. But all is well. So much the more will you be conformed to the death of Christ. Go on in his name, and in the power of his might. Suffer and conquer all things.

*To Miss Elizabeth Briggs.*

## LIII.

### "A BABE IN THE PURE LOVE OF CHRIST."

CASTLEBAR, *May* 31, 1771.

MY DEAR BETSY: You judge exceeding right; as yet you are but a little child, just a babe in the pure love of Christ. As a little child hang upon him, and simply expect a supply of all your wants. In this respect reasoning profits you nothing; indeed, it is just opposite to believing, whereby you hearken to the inward voice, which says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Undoubtedly it would be a cross to declare what God has done for your soul; nay, and afterward Satan would accuse you on the account, telling you, "You did it out of pride."

Yea, and some of your sisters would blame you, and perhaps put the same construction upon it. Nevertheless, if you do it with a single eye it will be well pleasing to God.

*To Miss Elizabeth Briggs.*

## LIV.

### "YOU ARE NOT CALLED TO DESIRE SUFFERING."

[The most we know of Miss Nancy Bolton is found in the following letters. The lesson of suffering is clearly given. The advices of Letter LVI are given to almost every young correspondent. We note Wesley's poetical letter, LVII, on "Thy Race of Duty Run," that holds a statement of Methodist belief.]

BANDON, *May* 2, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER: I wanted much to know how your soul prospered. I could not doubt but the god of this world, the enemy of all righteousness, would use every means to move you from your steadfastness. Blessed be God, you are not moved! that all his labor has been in vain! Hitherto hath God helped you; and, fear not, he will help you to the end. He gives you health as a token for good; he can trust you with it, while you give him your heart. And O, stand fast in the glorious liberty wherewith he has made you free! You are not called to desire

suffering. Innocent nature is averse from pain; only, as soon as his will appears, yours to sink down before it! Hark! what does he say to you now? "Lovest thou me more than these?"—more than these:

> Wealth, honor, pleasure, or what else
> This short-enduring world can give?

Then "feed my lambs;" carry the little ones in thy bossom.

*To Miss Nancy Bolton.*

## LV.

### "HE HEARS THE CRY OF YOUR HEART."

LONDON, *June* 15, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER: A letter from you is always welcome, but never more so than now, as this is the time wherein it seems good to our Lord to try you as by fire. Fear nothing; only believe. He is with you in the fire, so that the flames shall not kindle upon you. O how you will praise him by and by for his wise and gracious visitation! He is purging away all your dross, that you may be a vessel meet for the Master's use. Happy are they that do his will, and happier still they that suffer it. But, whatever you suffer, cast not away that confidence which

hath great recompense of reward. In order to keep it, do not reason, but simply look up to Him that loves you. Tell him, as a little child, all your wants. Look up, and your suit is made ; he hears the cry of your heart.

*To Miss Nancy Bolton.*

## LVI.

### "NEVER LET SLIP ANY BLESSING."

LYNN, *November* 7, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER: At length I have snatched an hour to repeat to you in writing the advices which I gave you before: 1. Keep that safe which God has given you : never let slip any blessing which you have received. Regard none who tell you, "You must lose it." No; you never need lose one degree of love. 2. You never will, provided you are a careful steward of the manifold gifts of God. To him that hath, that is, useth what he hath, it shall be given still, and that more abundantly. Therefore, 3. Use your every grace. Stir up the gift of God that is in you. Be zealous! Be active! Spare no one. Speak for God wherever you are. But, meantime, 4. Be humble; let all that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. And be clothed with humility. Pray that you may

always feel that you are nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. In this spirit speak and do everything, giving all the glory to Him that lives and rules in your heart by faith.

*To Miss Naney Bolton.*

## LVII.

### "THY RACE OF DUTY RUN."

LONDON, *July* 18, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER: Your late conversation was exceeding pleasant to me. I had sometimes been almost inclined to think that your affection was lessened, but I now believe it is not. I trust your love is not grown cold. This gave me much satisfaction, though I could not but be concerned at seeing you so encumbered with worldly business. Surely it will not be so always. But God's time is best! Two or three of those little things I have sent you:

With peaceful mind thy race of duty run:
God nothing does, or suffers to be done,
But what thou wouldst thyself, if thou couldst see
Through all events of things as well as he.

Let thy presence be without delay:
If thou defer it to another day,
Thou must repent for a day more of sin,
While a day less remains to do it in.

Nor steel nor flint alone produces fire,
Nor spark arises till they both conspire :
Nor faith alone, nor works without, is right ;
Salvation rises when they both unite.

If gold be offeerd thee, thou dost not say,
" To-morrow I will take it, not to-day ; "
Salvation offered why art thou so cool
To let thyself become to-morrow's fool ?

Prayer and thanksgiving is the vital breath
That keeps the spirit of a man from death :
For prayer attracts into the living soul
The life that fills the universal whole ;
And giving thanks is breathing forth again
The praise of Him who is the life of men.

Two different painters, artists in their way,
Have drawn Religion in her full display.
To both she sat : one gazed at her all o'er ;
The other fixed upon her features more.
Hervey has figured her with every grace
That dress could give ; but Law has hit her face.

The specious sermons of a learned man
Are little else than flashes in the pan.
The mere haranguing upon what they call
Morality, is powder without ball :
But he who preaches with a Christian grace
Fires at your vices, and the shot takes place.

Faith, Hope, and Love were questioned what they thought
Of future glory, which Religion taught.

Now Faith believed it firmly to be true,
And Hope expected so to find it too ;
Love answered, smiling with a conscious glow,
"*Believe ! expect !* I *know* it to be so."

Go on in this humble, gentle love, that you may abound therein more and more. Aim at nothing higher than this; and may the God of love still possess you whole, and guide your every thought and word and work!

*To Miss Nancy Bolton.*

## LVIII.

### A GREAT STEP TOWARD CHRISTIAN RESIGNATION.

LONDON, *January* 2, 1781.

MY DEAR SISTER: It is a great step toward Christian resignation to be thoroughly convinced of that great truth that there is no such thing as chance in the world ; that fortune is only another name for providence ; only it is covered providence. An event, the cause of which does not appear, we commonly say, comes by chance. O no ; it is guided by an unerring hand ; it is the result of infinite wisdom and goodness. Such are all the afflictive circumstances that have followed you in a constant succession almost from your childhood. He that made the

Captain of your salvation perfect through sufferings has called you to walk in the same path, and for the same end, namely, that you may learn obedience, more full, inward obedience, a more perfect conformity to his death, by the things that you suffer. A little while, and "He will wipe all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more sorrow or crying; neither shall there be any more pain!" but you shall hear the great voice out of heaven, saying, "The tabernacle of God is with men; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God!"

*To Miss Nancy Bolton.*

## LIX.

### "SATAN MIMICKED THE WORKS OF GOD."

[One of the most important letters in the series. "Guard all, especially young persons, from laying stress upon anything but the written word of God." Do you take the hint about making a "little excursion" to strengthen faith?]

BRISTOL, *August* 31, 1784.

MY DEAR SISTER: Many years ago Mr. Hall, then strong in faith, believed God called him to marry my youngest sister. He told her so. She fully believed him, and none could convince one or the other to the contrary. I talked with her about it; but she had "so often made it matter of prayer

that she could not be deceived." In a week he dropped her, courted her eldest sister, and as soon as was convenient married her. The disappointed one then found exactly the same temptations that you do now. But neither did she keep the devil's counsel. She told me all that was in her heart, and the consequence was that, by the grace of God, she gained a complete victory. So will you ; and you will be the better enabled by your own experience to guard all, especially young persons, from laying stress upon anything but the written word of God. Guard them against reasoning in that dangerous manner, " If I was deceived in this, then I was deceived in thinking myself justified." Not at all, although nature, or Satan in the latter case, admirably well mimicked the works of God. By mighty prayer repel all those suggestions, and afterward your faith will be so much the more strengthened, and you will be more than conqueror through Him that loveth you. Whenever you find yourself pressed above measure you must make another little excursion. While you help others God will help you. This may be one end of this uncommon dispensation. You must not bury your talent in the earth.

*To Miss Nancy Bolton.*

## LX.

### "A DANGEROUS WAY OF THINKING."

WEDNESBURY, *March* 28, 1785.

MY DEAR SISTER: You are in danger of falling into both extremes—of making light of, as well as fainting under, His chastening. This you do whenever you look at any circumstance without seeing the hand of God in it; without seeing at the same instant this unkindness, this reproach, this returning evil for good, as well as this faintness, this weariness, this pain, is the cup which my Father hath given me. And shall I not drink it? Why does he give it me? Only for my profit that I "may be a partaker of his holiness."

I have often found an aptness both in myself and others to connect events that have no real relation to each other. So one says, "I am as sure this is the will of God as that I am justified." Another says, "God as surely spake this to my heart as ever he spoke to me at all." This is an exceedingly dangerous way of thinking or speaking. We know not what it may lead us to. It may sap the very foundation of our religion. It may insensibly draw us into deism or atheism. My dear Nancy, my

sister, my friend, beware of this! The grace of God is sufficient for you! And whatever clouds may interpose between, his banner over you is love. Look to yourself that you lose not the things that you have gained, but that you may receive a full reward.

*To Miss Nancy Bolton.*

## LXI.

### "THE BRIGHTEST CROWN WILL BE GIVEN TO THE SUFFERERS."

LONDON, *January* 9, 1789.

MY DEAR SISTER: "Sir, you are troubled," said Mr. Law to me, "because you do not understand how God is dealing with you. Perhaps if you did it would not so well answer his design. He is teaching you to trust him farther than you can see him." He is now teaching you the same lesson. Hitherto you cannot understand his ways. But they are all mercy and truth. And though you do not know now what he does you shall know hereafter.

I am acquainted with several persons whom I believed to be saved from sin. But there is great variety in the manner wherein God is pleased to lead them. Some of them are called to act much for God, some to rejoice much,

some to suffer much. All of these shall receive their crown. But when the Son of man shall come in his glory the brightest crown will be given to the sufferers. Look up, thou blessed one! the time is at hand!

*To Miss Nancy Bolton.*

## LXII.

### "ONLY UNBELIEF KEEPS OUT THE MIGHTY BLESSING."

[In Wesley's Journal, April 22, 1778, we read his only mention of Miss Stokes. "I went on to Clonmell, where our room being small, and the weather unfavorable for preaching abroad, we procured the largest room in the town, which was in the Quakers' workhouse. I had hardly sat down when a young man came and said, 'My father and mother send their kind respects, and would be glad of thy company this evening.' His mother (now Mrs. Dudley) was my old acquaintance Molly Stokes. I went at four, and spent an hour very agreeably. But much company coming in Mr. Dudley desired I would call again in the morning. I then told him what his wife was reported to say of me. He answered me, it was an utter mistake; that she had never spoke a disrespectful word concerning me."]

CHESTER, *March* 17, 1771.

DEAR MISS STOKES: I almost wonder, Have I found another Jenny Cooper? I take knowledge of her spirit in you. I doubt not God has begun a good work in your heart.

He has given you a taste of the powers of the world to come. He has delivered you from the vain expectation of finding happiness in the things of earth, and I trust you will be entangled no more in that snare. You know where true joys are to be found. Now stand fast in that beginning of liberty wherewith Christ has made you free. Yet do not stand still. This is only the dawn of day; the Sun of righteousness will rise upon you in quite another manner than you have hitherto experienced. And who knows how soon? Is he not near? Are not all things now ready? What hinders you from receiving him now? "If thou canst believe." Here is all the bar; only unbelief keeps out the mighty blessing! How many things have you been enabled to overcome, since I saw you in the great garden? But do not leave my poor Molly Jones behind; not that you can stay for her; but bring her on with you. I have much hopes that nothing will stop Sally James or Miss Flower. O bear one another's burdens! Then shall you be, not almost, but altogether, Christians!

*To Miss Mary Stokes.*

## LXIII.

### "STEER THE MIDDLE WAY.'

[Mr. Wesley, never given to flattery, gives a word of praise and many words of encouragement.]

DUBLIN, *April* 4, 1771.

MY DEAR MISS STOKES: There is a sweetness and friendliness in your spirit which is exceeding agreeable to me. And you have an openness withal which makes it the more pleasing. Let nothing rob you of this, although you cannot retain it without a good deal of resolution; for the example of all the world is against you, even of the religious world, which is full of closeness and reserve, if not of disguise also. How will you do then to retain that artless simplicity which almost everyone disclaims? Nay, this is not all; you must likewise expect to be yourself deceived, more or less. You will believe persons to be sincere who will abuse your confidence; who will say much and mean nothing. But let not my dear maid copy after them; let them have all the artifice to themselves. Still, let not mercy or truth forsake you, but write them upon the table of your heart. Only know to whom you speak, and then you cannot be too free. I pray, never be afraid of writing too large letters; you

must not measure yours by mine, for I have a little more business than you.

Your weakness and tenderness of constitution, without great care, may prove a snare to you. Some allowance must be made on that account, but the danger is of making too much. Steer the middle way. So far as you are able rejoice to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and deny yourself every pleasure which you are not divinely conscious prepares you for taking pleasure in God. I am glad you can converse freely with Sally Flower. Surely she and you together might overrule Molly Jones's Irish reason for not meeting, "I *said* I would not."

*To Miss Mary Stokes.*

## LXIV.

### "CHILDLIKE BOLDNESS OF FAITH PECULIARLY NECESSARY."

[Letters LXIV and LXVI are answers to a diffident young woman, prompting her to speak for Jesus. He has no faith in a "silent meeting." She seemed to be getting under the influence of the Quakers. In fact, she afterward married a Quaker.]

MY DEAR SISTER: In order to speak for God you must not confer with flesh and blood, or you will never begin. You should vehemently resist the reasoning devil, who will

never want arguments for your silence. Indeed, naturally all the passions justify themselves; so do fear and shame in particular. In this case, therefore, the simple, childlike boldness of faith is peculiarly necessary. And when you have broke through and made the beginning, then prudence has its office; that is, Christian (not worldly) prudence, springing from the unction of the Holy One, and teaching you how far and in what manner to speak, according to a thousand various circumstances.

You do not yet see the day dawn with regard to those who are near and dear to you; but you must not hence infer that it never will. The prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips will not fall to the ground; but "though it seem to tarry long, true and faithful is His word."

I am glad Miss Williams comes a little nearer to us. Do the same good office to Molly Jones. She professes to love you; if she really does, press on, and you will prevail. Does not Tommy Jones hurt her? He is lively and good-natured, but has no liking either to the doctrine or discipline of the Methodists. Such a person is just calculated for weakening all that is right and strengthening all that is wrong in her.

*To Miss Mary Stokes.*

## LXV.

### THE USES OF AFFLICTION.

YARM, *June* 16, 1772.

WE are sure the means which our blessed Lord uses to conform us to his image are (all circumstances considered) the very best; for he cannot but do all things well; therefore, whenever it pleases him to send affliction, then affliction is best. Yet we must not imagine he is tied down to this or that he cannot give any degree of holiness without it. We have reason to believe, from the earliest records, that St. Paul suffered a thousand times more than St. John. And yet one can hardly doubt but St. John was as holy as he or any of the apostles. Therefore stand ready for whatsoever our Lord shall send; but do not require him to send you affliction. Perhaps he will take another way; he will overpower your whole soul with peace and joy and love, and thereby work in you a fuller conformity to himself than you ever experienced yet. You have; hold fast there:

All's alike to me, so I
In my Lord may live and die.

*To Miss Mary Stokes.*

## LXVI.

### "BEWARE OF STRIKING INTO NEW PATHS."

SHEFFIELD, *August* 10, 1772.

MY DEAR SISTER: Having finished, for the present, my business at Leeds, I am come thus far on my journey to Bristol. But I must take Haverford West in the way thither; so that I do not expect to be there till the 30th instant. How many blessings may you receive in the meantime, provided you seek them in the good old way wherein you received the Lord Jesus Christ! So walk in him still. Beware of striking into new paths! of being wise above that is written! Perhaps we may find sweetness in the beginning, but it would be bitterness in the latter end. O my sister, my friend, I am afraid for you! I doubt you are stepping out of the way. When you enter into your closet, and shut the door, and pray to your Father who seeth in secret, then is the time to groan, to him who reads the heart, the unutterable prayer. But to be silent in the congregation of his people is wholly new, and therefore wholly wrong. A silent meeting was never heard of in the Church of Christ for sixteen hundred years. I entreat you to read over, with much prayer,

that little tract, *A Letter to a Quaker*. I fear you are on the brink of a precipice, and you know it not. The enemy has put on his angel's face, and you take him for a friend. Retire immediately! Go not near the tents of those dead, formal men called Quakers. Keep close to your class, to your band, to your old teachers; they have the words of eternal life! Have any of them offended you? Has any stumbling-block been laid in your way?

*To Miss Mary Stokes.*

## LXVII.

### "CAN YOU GIVE UP ALL FOR CHRIST?"

[Miss Bishop, at Keynsham, was at the head of what Mr. Wesley calls "a Christian school." In his Journal, October 5, 1787, he writes: "I preached at noon in Keynsham, and the power of God was present in an uncommon degree; so was it when I met the children at Miss Bishop's, and afterward those at Mr. Simpson's. I verily think the spirit and behavior of these two sets of children gradually affect the whole place, which now retains scarce anything of the brutality and savageness for which it was eminent some years ago." You will note that the correspondence was long before the above entry.]

BUT if you are willing to cast in your lot with us I had rather that the single women in both classes, who desire it, should

meet with you, and any others who are not afraid of the reproach of Christ. In that little tract, *A Plain Account of the People called Methodists*, you see our whole plan. We have but one point in view, to be altogether Christians, scriptural, rational Christians. For which we well know, not only the world, but the almost Christians, will never forgive us. From these, therefore, if you join heart and hand with us, you are to expect neither justice nor mercy. If you are determined, let me know. But consider what you do. Can you give up all for Christ? the hope of improving your fortune, a fair reputation, and agreeable friends? Can he make you amends for all these? Is he alone a sufficient portion? I think you will find him so. And if you were as entirely devoted to God as Jenny Cooper was you would never have cause to repent of your choice, either in time or in eternity.

## LXVIII.

### "BE ALTOGETHER CHRISTIANS."

[The correspondence began by the offer of Miss Bishop to become a Methodist. She desired more careful instruction. In the preceding letter Mr. Wesley says that they have but one point in view: "to be altogether Christians, scriptural, rational Christians."

She casts in her lot with the Methodists. She now has peace with God but does not know "the time" when it was received. Read his encouraging answer.]

*November* 22, 1769.

MY DEAR SISTER: It is exceedingly strange. I should really wonder (if I could wonder at any weakness of human nature) that so good a woman as ——, and one who particularly piques herself on her catholic spirit, should be guilty of such narrowness of spirit. Let us not vary in thought or word from the Methodist principle "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

We have other instances of persons who now enjoy the peace of God, and yet do not know the time when they received it. And God is sovereign; he may make what exceptions he pleases to his general rule. So this objection is easily set aside; and so is that of your age. The Spirit of the Lord can give understanding, either in a longer or in a shorter time. And I doubt not but he will give you favor in the eyes of your sisters. You have only to go on in simplicity, doing the will of God from the heart, and trusting in the anointing of the Holy One to teach you of all things.

I am glad you are acquainted with Miss

Owens. Encourage each other to be altogether Christians. Defy fashion and custom, and labor only to

Steer your useful lives below
By reason and by grace.

Let not the gentlewoman entrench upon the Christian, but be a simple follower of the Lamb.

At present you are exactly in your place, and I trust no temptation, inward or outward, shall ever induce you to depart from the work to which God has called you. You must expect to be pushed to both extremes by turns, and you need all the power of God to save you from it. And he will save you to the uttermost, provided you still retain the sense of your poverty and helplessness.

*To Miss Bishop.*

## LXIX.

### "FAITH IS SPIRITUAL SIGHT."

[In Letters LXIX–LXX, note her questions (they trouble some young women to-day): the fears and doubts, and how cured; the way to true simplicity; freedom from unprofitable reasonings; communion with saints in paradise.]

*November* 5, 1770.

MY DEAR SISTER: I am glad you had such success in your labor of love; in all things you shall reap, if you faint not. And

the promise is, "They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." How does the little society prosper? Are you all united in love? And are you all aware of that bane of love, talebearing and evil speaking? Do you retain that little spark of faith? Are you going forward, and have you as strong a desire as ever "to increase with all the increase of God?"

> See the Lord, thy keeper, stand,
> Omnipotently near!
> Lo, he holds thee by thy hand,
> And banishes thy fear!

O trust him, love him, and praise him!

I know not that you have anything to do with fear. Your continual prayer should be for faith and love. I admired a holy man in France who, considering the state of one who was full of doubts and fears, forbade him to think of his sins at all, and ordered him to think only of the love of God in Christ. The fruit was all his fears vanished away, and he lived and died in the triumph of faith.

Faith is sight, that is, spiritual sight, and it is light and not darkness; so that the famous popish phrase, "The darkness of faith," is a contradiction in terms. O beware of all who talk in that unscriptural manner, or they will

perplex, if not destroy, you! I cannot find in my Bible any such sin as legality. Truly, we have been often afraid where no fear was. I am not half legal enough, not enough under the law of love. Sometimes there is painful conviction of sin preparatory to full sanctification, sometimes a conviction that has far more pleasure than pain, being mixed with joyful expectation. Always there should be a gradual growth in grace, which need never be intermitted from the time we are justified. Do not wait, therefore, for pain or anything else, but simply for all-conquering faith.

*To Miss Bishop.*

## LXX.

### "YOU LOOK INWARD TOO MUCH AND UPWARD TOO LITTLE."

*February* 16, 1771.

MY DEAR SISTER: You look inward too much and upward too little.

> Christ is ready to impart
> Life to all, for life who sigh;
> In thy mouth and in thy heart
> The word is ever nigh.

Encourage yourself to trust in him; that is your point; then he will do all things well. Legality, with most who use that term, really

means tenderness of conscience. There is no propriety in the word if one would take it for seeking justification by works. Considering, therefore, how hard it is to fix the meaning of that odd term, and how dreadfully it has been abused, I think it highly advisable for all the Methodists to lay it aside.

*To Miss Bishop.*

## LXXI.

### "COMMUNION OF SAINTS EXTENDS TO THOSE IN PARADISE."

*June* 12, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER: "True simplicity," Fénelon says, "is that grace whereby the soul is delivered from all unprofitable reflections upon itself." I add, "and upon all other persons and things." This is an unspeakable blessing. And it is the mere gift of God, not naturally annexed either to greatness or littleness of understanding. A single eye is a great help to this. Seek one thing, and you will be far less troubled with unprofitable reasonings.

It has in all ages been allowed that the communion of saints extends to those in paradise as well as those upon earth, as they are all one body united under one head. And

> Can death's interposing tide
> Spirits one in Christ divide?

But it is difficult to say either what kind or what degree of union may be between them. It is not improbable their fellowship with us is far more sensible than ours with them. Suppose any of them are present, they are hid from our eyes, but we are not hid from their sight. They, no doubt, clearly discern all our words and actions, if not all our thoughts too. For it is hard to think these walls of flesh and blood can intercept the view of an angelic being. But we have in general only a faint and indistinct perception of their presence, unless in some peculiar instances, where it may answer some gracious ends of divine providence. Then it may please God to permit that they should be perceptible, either by some of our outward senses or by an internal sense, for which human language has not any name. But I suppose this is not a common blessing. I have known but a few instances of it. To keep up constant and close communion with God is the most likely means to obtain this also.

Whatever designs a man has, whatever he is proposing to do, either for himself or his friends, when his spirit goes hence all is at an end, and it is in this sense only that "all our thoughts perish." Otherwise all our thoughts and de-

signs, though not carried into execution, are noted in His book, who accepts us according to our willing mind, and rewards intentions as well as actions. By aiming at him in all things, by studying to please him in all your thoughts, words, and actions, you are continually sowing to the Spirit, and of the Spirit you will reap life everlasting.

*To Miss Bishop.*

## LXXII.

### "DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEAVINESS AND DARKNESS OF SOUL."

[Mr. Wesley asks his correspondents many questions. This young student, with the strong mind, brings some lengthy answers from the great divine. Note the difference between heaviness and darkness of soul. Many need the words concerning "conversation," "solitude," "self-denial."]

*June* 17, 1774.

MY DEAR SISTER: It is something strange that I should never hear of your sickness till I hear of your recovery. Both the one and the other were designed for blessings, and I doubt not but they have proved so to you. Since I saw you first I have not observed much occasion for reproving; but we have all need of advice and exhortation, else we should soon be weary and faint in our minds. It is

to be expected that above one half of those who not only profess great things, but actually enjoy the great salvation, will, nevertheless, be sooner or later moved from their steadfastness. Some of them will indeed recover what they had lost, others will die in their sins. The observing this should incite us to double our diligence, lest we should fall after their example.

The difference between heaviness and darkness of soul (the wilderness state) should never be forgotten. Darkness (unless in the case of bodily disorder) seldom comes upon us but by our own fault. It is not so with respect to heaviness, which may be occasioned by a thousand circumstances, such as frequently neither our wisdom can foresee nor our power prevent. It seems your trial was of the latter kind; perhaps, too, it was partly owing to the body, but of whatsoever kind it was you may profit thereby; it need not leave you as it found you. Remember the wise saying of Mr. Dodd, "It is a great loss to lose an affliction." If you are no better for it you lose it; but you may gain thereby both humility, seriousness, and resignation.

We so become all things to all, as not to hurt our own souls, when we first secure a single eye, a steady design to please all for their good to edification, and then take care

that our discourse be always good to the use of edifying and such as may minister grace to the hearers; but in order to this we have need of power from on high and of the wisdom that sitteth by the throne. This alone can give us to order our conversation aright, so as to profit both others and ourselves. Before you can do this effectually you must conquer your natural reserve and exercise it only to those of whom you know nothing at all or of whom you know nothing good. Perhaps there is one occasion more on which it will be highly expedient if not necessary, namely, when good persons (at least in some measure so) sink beneath their character, trifle away time, or indulge themselves in a conversation which has no tendency to improve either the speaker or the hearer.

I think it will not be best for you to go out less than you ever did. Suppose you have more faith and more love (as I would fain think you have), you certainly ought to go out more. Otherwise your faith will insensibly die away. It is by works only that it can be made perfect. And the more the love of solitude is indulged the more it will increase. This is a temptation common to men. In every age and country Satan has whispered to those who began to taste the powers of the

world to come, "To the desert!" "To the wilderness!" Most of our little flock at Oxford were tried with this, my brother and I in particular. Nay, but I say, "To the Bible! To the Bible!" And there you will learn, "as you have time, to do good unto all men;" to warn every man, to exhort every man as you have opportunity. Although the greatest part of your care and labor should be laid out on those that are of the household of faith, certainly you may do good to others without anyways endangering your own salvation. What at present you much want is simplicity, in the Archbishop of Cambray's sense of the word: grace "whereby the soul casts off all unnecessary reflections upon itself." I wish I could say of you, as I did of a young person many years ago, when I sent her his little book:

> In art and nature, can we find
> Colors to picture thee?
> Speak, Cambray's pen, for Sally's mind;
> She is simplicity.

To be enabled to relieve those who are in want is one excellent part of self-denial. But you must not imagine that this will be the only one. No; you have a message from God to some of those to whom no one almost dare speak the plain truth, and he will confirm the word of

his messenger, especially to those who are in weakness or pain or under any kind of affliction. At such a time greatness stands aloof, and they are accessible as common persons.

In religion, as well as in all things else, it is use that brings perfectness. I have long labored under the same infirmity with you, and I find but one way to conquer. Take up your cross. When the occasion offers, break through. Speak, though it is pain and grief unto you, and it will be easier and easier, till you resemble an eminent surgeon, who once said to my brother, "Mr. Wesley, you know I would not hurt a fly; I would not give pain to any living thing. But if it were necessary I would scrape all the flesh off a man's bones and never turn my head aside."

*To Miss Bishop.*

## LXXIII;

### "THOUSANDS PERISH THROUGH THE NEGLECT OF OTHERS."

[He gives a plain answer to the question concerning Ezek. xxxiii, 8. Then comes an answer to the question whether our petitions on behalfof others are answered.]

*December* 26, 1776.

MY DEAR SISTER: Either that text in Ezek. xxxiii, 8, is to be understood literally or it has no meaning at all. And nothing

is more certain, in fact, than that thousands perish through the neglect of others. And yet God is fully justified therein, because the principal cause of their destruction is their own neglect, their not working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

Whatever other ends are answered by prayer, this is one, and it seems a primary one, that we may have the petitions which we ask of him. Asking is the appointed means of receiving, and that for others, as well as for ourselves, as we may learn partly from reason itself, but more fully from our own experience, and more clearly still from revelation. Reason teaches us to argue from analogy. If you (because you have a regard for me) would do more for a third person at my request than otherwise you would have done, how much more will God, at the request of his beloved children, give blessings to those they pray for, which otherwise he would not have given! And does all experience confirm this? How many times have the petitions of others been answered to our advantage, and ours on the behalf of others?

But the most decisive of all proofs is the Scripture: "Go to my servant Job, and he shall pray for you; for him will I accept." It

was not a temporal blessing which was here in question, but a spiritual, the forgiveness of their sin. So when St. Paul said, "Brethren, pray for us," he did not desire this on a temporal account only, that "he might be delivered out of the mouth of the lion," but on a spiritual, "that he might speak boldly, as he ought to speak." But the instances of this are innumerable. In proof of the general truth that God gives us both temporal and spiritual blessings, in answer to each other's prayers, I need only remind you of one Scripture more: "Let them pray over him; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The promise in the following verse is still more comprehensive: "Pray one for another, and ye shall be healed" of whatsoever you have confessed to each other.

I lament over every pious young woman who is not as active as possible; seeing everyone shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. O lose no time! Buy up every opportunity of doing good. It does not appear to me that you ought, on any consideration, to give up the privileges you mention. Neither do I apprehend that you would be more useful in a

boarding school than you are in your present station. I cannot, therefore, advise you to relinquish it. You have now a large field of action, you have employment enough, both temporal and spiritual, and you have ease enough. Abide in your calling. The pious young woman whom I particularly lament over does not live at Bath, but Bristol. But I cannot help her; she allows premises, but holds fast her own conclusion. O, who can bear riches! Who can gain money, without, in some measure, losing grace! I verily believe if she were as poor as you she would be as advisable.

*To Miss Bishop.*

## LXXIV.

### "YOU NEVER NEED LOSE ANYTHING OF WHAT GOD HAS WROUGHT."

[Elizabeth Ritchie lived at Otley. Her saintly father was a warm friend of Mr. Wesley. "Betsy," though in poor health, lived a beautiful life and was often referred to by Mr. Wesley. The correspondence continued twelve years. One of her first letters states how she entered into the higher Christian experience. "Yet I hardly durst lay hold on them (the promises), unbelief striving so hard to prevent my entering into rest. But the Lord continued so to bless me that at last I could not doubt; all I feared was, losing what I had received,

which made me backward in speaking of it. I thought I would wait and see how it would be with me by and by. . . . Told the Band, and God sweetly smiled on me. I hope you will reprove and advise me as occasion shall require."]

*June* 3, 1774.

MY DEAR BETSY: I shall much want to hear that you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free. It is absolutely certain that you never need lose anything of what God has wrought. He is able and he is willing to give you always what he has once given. He will do it provided you watch unto prayer and stir up the gift of God which is in you. There is one invariable rule which God observes in all his dealings with the children of men: "Unto him that hath" (uses what he hath) "shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." When we are justified he gives us one talent; to those that use this he gives more. When we are sanctified he gives, as it were, five talents. And if you use the whole power which is then given he will not only continue that power but increase it day by day. Meantime be not ignorant of Satan's devices; he will cast temptations upon you,

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the ground.

But with every temptation there shall be a way to escape; and you shall be more than con-

queror through him that loves you. You can do, you can suffer his whole will. Go on in his name and in the power of his might.

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXV.

### "ONE MEANS OF RETAINING THE PURE LOVE OF GOD."

*June* 23, 1774.

MY DEAR BETSY: It gives me pleasure to find that you still stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and that in spite of various temptations. And these indeed you are still to expect, for Satan neither slumbers nor sleeps, and he will strive to torment if he cannot destroy. Nay, God himself, as one observes, "prepareth for thee occasions of fighting, that thou mayest conquer." So that you are still called to fight the good fight of faith, and thus to lay hold on eternal life. One admirable help toward conquering all is for believers to keep close together, to walk hand in hand, and provoke one another to love and to good works. And one means of retaining the pure love of God is the exhorting others to press earnestly after it. When you meet on a Sunday morning I doubt not but this will be the chief matter both of your prayers and conversation. You

may then expect to be more and more abundantly endued with power from on high, witnessing that he is faithful and just both to forgive us our sins and also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXVI.

### REDEEMING THE TIME.

[We give in this note Miss Ritchie's reply to the following letter. "I am in some measure always sensible of His presence, though at times I have a much deeper consciousness *that God is here* than at others; and though my lips are not always employed in calling on the Lord, yet I feel the desire of my soul continually toward him, and my heart cries unto him, without a voice, 'Do with me as thou wilt;' so that in this sense I pray without ceasing."]

*September* 1, 1774.

MY DEAR BETSY: It is an admirable providence which keeps you thus weak in body till your soul has received more strength. It is good that you should feel how very helpless you are, that you may hang upon Him continually. Are you always sensible of his presence? In what sense do you pray without ceasing? Can you in everything give thanks? And have you a witness in yourself that all you say and do is well pleasing to him?

Could you but use constant exercise in the open air I think you would need no other medicine. But it is certain, be your body well or ill, all is best as long as your soul is stayed on Him. And why should not this be without any intermission till your spirit returns to God? nay, with a continual increase? For this is your calling, to sink deeper and deeper into him; out of his fullness to receive more and more till you know all that love of God that passeth knowledge.

I hope you do not pass any day without spending some time in private exercises. What do you read at these seasons? Do you read, as it were, by chance, or have you a method in reading? I want you to make the best use that is possible of every means of improvement. Now is the time! Now you have the fervor of youth on your side. Now animal nature is in its perfection. Now your faculties are in their vigor. And happy are you, who have been enabled to begin your race betimes! I hope you are just now minding this one thing, looking unto Jesus and pressing on to the mark, to the prize of our high calling! O run, and never tire!

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXVII.

### "DO YOU FEEL NOTHING CONTRARY TO RESIGNATION?"

*July* 15, 1776

MY DEAR BETSY: I suppose you wait for my writing first. Nay, I hope this is the case; otherwise I should be afraid that you were fallen ill again. How is your health? And how is your mind? Do you find as near and as constant a communion with God as ever? Are you always happy? Does no circumstance interrupt or deaden your spirit of prayer? Do you feel nothing contrary to resignation? Can you say with your whole heart,

> "Determined all thy will to obey,
> Thy blessings I restore:
> Give, Lord, or take thy gifts away,
> I praise thee evermore?"

The word of our Lord to you is, "Feed my lambs." Methinks I see you giving yourself up, as far as you possibly can, to that blessed work, carrying the weak, as it were, in your bosom, and gently leading the rest to the waters of comfort. Meantime your own soul will enjoy a well of water springing up into everlasting life. If you find any perplexing temptation in your way you should not scruple

to let me know. Youth is the season for many of the most dangerous temptations incident to human nature. But indeed you are preserved from many of these by your settled determination to slight all dreams of creature happiness and give your heart to Him who alone is worthy.

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXVIII.

### "AN INLET FOR A THOUSAND DELUSIONS."

*August* 12, 1776.

MY DEAR BETSY: To talk of "thinking without ideas" is stark nonsense. Whatever is presented to your mind is an idea; so that to be without ideas is not to think at all. Seeing, feeling, joy, grief, pleasure, pain, are ideas. Therefore to be without ideas is to be without either sense or reason. Mr. —— certainly does not understand the word; he mistakes it for images.

O, desire nothing different in nature from love! There is nothing higher in earth or heaven. Whatever he speaks of, which seems to be higher, is either natural or preternatural enthusiasm. Desire none of these extraordinaries. Such a desire might be an inlet to a

thousand delusions. I wish your desires may all center in that—

"I want the witness, Lord,
That all I do is right!
According to thy will and word,
Well pleasing in thy sight!
I ask no higher state,
Indulge me but in this!
And soon, or later, then translate
To my eternal bliss."

You say Satan laid a snare for you. What snare was that? I am concerned in whatever concerns you.

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXIX.

### "DO YOU LIVE IN ETERNITY?"

[*Wesley's Journal*, May 28, 1777: "I found E. R. weaker and happier than ever. Her life seemed spun out to the last thread. I spent half an hour with her, to

Teach her, at once, and learn of her, to die."

June 9.—"I spent one more hour at Otley. . . . I have not before seen so triumphant an instance of the power of faith. Though in constant pain she has no complaint; so does the glory of God overshadow her and swallow up her will in his!"]

*August* 2, 1777.

MY DEAR BETSY: It is with great pleasure I learn that God has been pleased to lift you up from the gates of death, and

that your strength is considerably increased, although you are far from being out of danger. When, and in what manner, was this change wrought? Can you impute it to any outward circumstance? How did you feel your mind affected when you found a return of strength? Did you rejoice or grieve, or calmly desire, "Let the will of the Lord be done?" In what respects are you better than when I saw you? In what respects are you the same, or worse? Give me as particular an account as you can. Do you find your soul as much alive to God as ever? Does not the corruptible body press down the soul? Do you feel faith's abiding impression, realizing things to come? Do you live in eternity and walk in eternity? And do you still (as Mr. De Renty says) "carry about with you an experimental verity and a fullness of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity?"

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXX.

### "A CLOSE TRIAL."

*August* 24, 1777.

MY DEAR BETSY: Ever since I was informed that it has pleased God in some measure to restore your strength I have

lived in hope that he will yet be entreated and will give you back to our prayers. Do you still find the same consciousness of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity? Do you find it day and night? In the midst of trials does it remain the same? But one would be ready to ask, excepting a weak body, what trials can you have?

> Secluded from the world, and all its care,
> Hast thou to joy or grieve, to hope or fear?

Unless it be for this—you long to please all for their good; but you cannot succeed. You would fain give them satisfaction; but they will not be satisfied. This may be a close trial

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXXI.

### WHY MIDDLE-AGED CHRISTIANS ARE LESS ZEALOUS FOR GOD.

TRACEEN, PEMBROKESHIRE, *August* 19, 1784.

SOME years ago I committed a little company of lovely children to the care of one of our sisters at Haverford. I was concerned yesterday to find she was weary of well-doing and had totally given up her charge. I hope, my dear Betsy, this will never be your case! You will never leave off your labor of love, though you should not always (not immediately, at least) see the fruit of your labors. You may

not immediately see Mrs. H—— so established in grace as you desire and hope. But in this, as well as many other instances, in due time "you shall reap if you faint not."

I have been often musing upon this—why the generality of Christians, even those that really are such, are less zealous and less active for God when they are middle-aged than they were when they were young. May we not draw an answer to this question from that declaration of our Lord (no less than eight times repeated by the evangelists), "To him that hath" (uses what he hath), "shall be given; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away that he hath." A measure of zeal and activity is given to everyone when he finds peace with God. If he earnestly and diligently uses this talent it will surely be increased. But if he ceases (yea, or intermits) to do good he insensibly loses both the will and the power. So there is no possible way to retain those talents but to use them to the uttermost. Let this never be the case of my dear friend. Never abate anything of your diligence in doing good. Sometimes, indeed, the feeble body sinks under you; but when you do all you can, you do enough.

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXXII.

### "THE SCANDAL OF THE CROSS IS CEASED."

DUBLIN, *June* 26, 1785.

MY DEAR BETSY: Our Lord has indeed poured out abundance of blessings, almost in every part of this kingdom. I have now gone through every province and visited all the chief societies, and I have found far the greater part of them increasing both in number and strength. Many are convinced of sin, many justified, and not a few perfected in love. One means of which is, that several of our young preachers of whom we made little account, appear to be (contrary to all expectation) men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; and they are pushing out, to the right hand and the left; and wherever they go God prospers their labor. I know not whether Thomas Walsh will not revive in two, if not three, of them.

Many years ago I was saying, "I cannot imagine how Mr. Whitefield can keep his soul alive, as he is not now going through honor and dishonor, evil report and good report; having nothing but honor and good report attending him wherever he goes." It is now my own case: I am just in the condition now that he was then in. I am become, I know not how,

an honorable man. The scandal of the cross is ceased; and all the kingdom, rich and poor, Papists and Protestants, behave with courtesy, nay, and seeming good will! It seems as if I had well-nigh finished my course, and our Lord was giving me an honorable discharge.

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXXIII.

### "THREE DIFFERENT WAYS WHEREIN GOD LEADS HIS PEOPLE."

[This is the last of this remarkable series of letters. Miss Ritchie was in some respects the most spiritual correspondent that Mr. Wesley had. She was the second of three persons whom Wesley knew as having a special "experience with regard to the Trinity."]

LONDON, *February* 24, 1786.

MY DEAR BETSY: It is doubtless the will of the Lord we should be guided by our reason, so far as it can go. But in many cases it gives us very little light, and in others none at all. In all cases it cannot guide us right but in subordination to the unction of the Holy One. So that in all our ways we are to acknowledge him, and he will direct our paths.

I do not remember to have heard or read anything like my own experience. Almost ever since I can remember I have been led in a peculiar way. I go on in an even line, being

very little raised at one time or depressed at another. Count Zinzendorf observes there are three different ways wherein it pleases God to lead his people. Some are guided almost in every instance by apposite texts of Scripture. Others see a clear and plain reason for everything they are to do. And yet others are led not so much by Scripture or reason as by particular impressions. I am very rarely led by impressions, but generally by reason and by Scripture. I see abundantly more than I feel. I want to feel more love and zeal for God.

*To Miss Betsy Ritchie.*

## LXXXIV.

### "OUR LIVES ARE NOT AT OUR OWN DISPOSAL."

[We give five letters to Hetty A. Roe, better known by her married name of "Hester Ann Rogers." She informs Wesley concerning certain work. She writes: "The children who professed sanctification when you were here stand steadfast and walk irreprovably, though they have much opposition from those who do not believe the doctrine. Indeed, I believe it is a means of good to them, constraining them to walk and cleave so much the nearer to God, that he may give them wisdom and strength."]

BRISTOL, *October* 6, 1776.

THE trials which a gracious Providence sends may be precious means of growing in grace, and particularly of increasing in faith,

patience, and resignation; and are they not all chosen for us by infinite wisdom and goodness? So that we may well subscribe to those beautiful lines—

"With patient mind thy course of duty run;
God nothing does, or suffers to be done,
But thou wouldst do thyself, if thou couldst see
The end of all events as well as he."

Everything that we can do for a parent we ought to do; that is, everything we can do without killing ourselves. But this we have no right to do. Our lives are not at our own disposal. Remember that, my dear Hetty, and do not carry a good principle too far. Do you still find

Labor is rest, and pain is sweet,
When thou, my God, art here?

I know pain or grief does not interrupt your happiness, but does it not lessen it? You often feel sorrow for your friends: does that sorrow rather quicken than depress your soul? Does it sink you deeper into God?

*To Miss H. A. Roe.*

## LXXXV.

### "CHANCE HAS NO SHARE IN THE GOVERNMENT THE WORLD."

LONDON, *February* 11, 1779.

MY DEAR HETTY: It is a great mercy that on the one hand you have previous warning of the trials that are at hand, and on the other are not careful about them, but only prepared to encounter them. We know indeed that these as well as all things are ordered by unerring wisdom, and are given us exactly at the right time, and in due number, weight, and measure. And they continue no longer than is best, for chance has no share in the government of the world. The Lord reigns and disposes all things, strongly and sweetly, for the good of them that love him. I rejoice to hear that you have now less hindrance in the way, and can oftener converse with his people. Be sure to improve every one of those precious opportunities of doing and receiving good.

I am often grieved to observe that although on His part "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance;" although he never repents of anything he has given us, but is willing to give it always, yet so very few retain the same ardor of affection which they received

either when they were justified, or when they were (more fully) sanctified. Certainly none need to lose any part of their light or their love. It may increase more and more. Of this you are a witness for God; and so is our dear Miss ——. You have not lost anything of what you have received; your love has never grown cold since the moment God visited you with his great salvation.

*To Miss H. A. Roe.*

## LXXXVI.

### "NOTHING HIGHER THAN PURE LOVE."

LIVERPOOL, *April* 10, 1781.

MY DEAR HETTY: Many of our brethren and sisters in London, during that great outpouring of the Spirit, spoke of several new blessings which they had attained. But after all they could find nothing higher than pure love, on which the full assurance of hope generally attends. This the inspired writings always represent as the highest point, only there are innumerable degrees of it. The plerophory, or full assurance of faith, is such a clear conviction of being now in the favor of God as excludes all doubt and fear concerning it. The full assurance of hope is such a clear confidence in the person who possesses it, that

he shall enjoy the glory of God, as excludes all doubt and fear concerning this. And this confidence is totally different from an opinion that "no saint shall fall from grace." It has, indeed, no relation to it. Bold, presumptuous men often substitute this base counterfeit in the room of that precious confidence. But it is observable the opinion remains just as strong while men are sinning and serving the devil as while they are serving God. Holiness or unholiness does not affect it in the least degree; whereas the giving way to anything unholy either in heart or life immediately clouds the full assurance of hope; which cannot subsist any longer than the heart cleaves steadfastly to God.

*To Miss H. A. Roe.*

## LXXXVII.

### "FULL SALVATION ATTAINABLE NOW BY FAITH."

LONDON, *January* 7, 1782.

MY DEAR HETTY: In the success of Mr. Leech's preaching we have one proof of a thousand that the blessing of God always attends the publishing of full salvation, as attainable now by simple faith. You should always have in readiness that little tract, "The Plain Account of Christian Perfection." There is nothing that would so effectually stop the

mouths of those who call this "a new doctrine." All who thus object are really (though they suspect nothing less) seeking sanctification by works. If it be by works, then certainly these will need time, in order to the doing of these works. But if it is by faith, it is plain a moment is as a thousand years. Then God says (in the spiritual as well as in the outward world), "Let there be light," and there is light.

I am in great hopes as J. S. got his own soul much quickened in Macclesfield he will now be a blessing to many at Chester. A few witnesses of pure love remain there still, but several are gone to Abraham's bosom. Encourage those in M. who enjoy it to speak explicitly of what they do experience, and to go on, till they know all that "love of God that passeth knowledge."

*To Miss H. A. Roe.*

## LXXXVIII.

### "CHILDREN ARE GLORIOUS MONUMENTS OF DIVINE GRACE."

DARLINGTON, *June* 25, 1782.

MY DEAR HETTY: It is certain there has been, for these forty years, such an outpouring of the Spirit, and such an increase of vital religion, as has not been in England for many centuries; and it does not appear that

the work of God at all decays. In many places there is a considerable increase of it, so that we have reason to hope that the time is at hand when the kingdom of God shall come with power, and all the people of this poor heathen land shall know him, from the least to the greatest.

I am glad you had so good an opportunity of talking with Mr. ——. Surely, if prayer was made for him, so useful an instrument as he was would not be suffered to lose all his usefulness. I wish you could make such little excursions oftener, as you always find your labor is not in vain.

This afternoon I was agreeably surprised by a letter from our dear Miss ——. It seems as if God, in answer to many prayers, has lent her to us yet a little longer. "He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up again. Wise are all his ways!"

Take particular care, my dear Hetty, of the children; they are glorious monuments of divine grace, and I think you have a particular affection for them, and a gift to profit them.

*To Miss H. A. Roe.*

## LXXXIX.

### "READ A LITTLE, PRAY AND MEDITATE MUCH."

*December* 17, 1773.

MY DEAR SISTER: Certainly the more good you do, the more will many be tempted against you. But go on. So much the more will the Spirit of glory and of Christ rest upon you. By fighting against that reserve you will conquer it; the more it is resisted the more it is weakened. You need not be overcome by peevishness any more. The grace of God is sufficient for you. It seems that you are at present in your place. "How knowest thou, but thou shalt gain thy brother?" The most profitable way of reading is to read in an exact method; suppose a chapter or two (as time may serve) in the Old Testament, with the notes, in the morning, and a chapter, more or less, of the New Testament, and notes, in the afternoon or evening. Next to this, it might be useful to read the works in order, only not too fast, not too much at a time. For all reading should be joined with meditation and prayer. Read a little; pray and meditate much. In order to converse usefully, we had a rule at Oxford to plan every conversation

before we went into company; to consider what subject would be most useful, and how to prosecute it. And though of yourself you are not sufficient for these things, yet One is nigh to supply all your wants. Love him and trust him for all things.

*To Miss Patty Chapman.*

## XC.

### "HABES FIDEM, SED EXIGUAM."

[The two letters to Miss Sophia Cooke note a great advance in her experience. She writes to Mr. Wesley because she thinks something must be wrong when the Spirit's influence is so mild and gentle upon her, and so powerful upon many others.]

LONDON, *October* 30, 1785.

MY DEAR MISS COOKE leans to the right-hand error. It is safer to think too little than too much of yourself. I blame none for not believing he is in the favor of God, till he is in a manner constrained to believe it. But, laying all circumstances together, I can make no doubt of your having a measure of faith. Many years ago, when one was describing the glorious privilege of a believer, I cried out, "If this be so, I have no faith." He replied, "*Habes fidem, sed exiguam;* 'You have faith, but it is weak.'"

The very same thing I say to you, my dear friend. You have faith, but it is only as a grain of mustard seed. Hold fast what you have, and ask for what you want. There is an irreconcilable variability in the operations of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men, more especially as to the manner of justification. Many find him rushing upon them like a torrent, while they experience

> The o'erwhelming power of saving grace.

This has been the experience of many; perhaps of more, in this late visitation, than in any other age since the times of the apostles. But in others, he works in a very different way:

> He designs his influence to infuse,
> Sweet, refreshing, as the violet dews.

It has pleased him to work the latter way in you from the beginning, and it is not improbable he will continue (as he has begun) to work in a gentle and almost imperceptible manner. Let him take his own way; he is wiser than you; he will do all things well. Do not reason against him, but let the prayer of your heart be,

> "Mold as thou wilt thy passive clay!"

I commit you and your dear sisters to his tender care.

*To Miss Cooke.*

## XCI.

### "LOVE IS THE SPRING OF ALL INWARD AND OUTWARD OBEDIENCE."

MACCLESFIELD, *March* 31, 1787.

NOW you give me a proof, my dear Miss Cooke, that you have not forgotten me. But considering that I am usually obliged to write in haste, I often doubt whether my correspondence is worth having.

When the witness and the fruit of the Spirit meet together, there can be no stronger proof that we are of God. But still you may relapse into doubts, if you do not steadily watch against evil reasonings; and were you to substitute the deductions of reason for the witness of the Spirit, you never would be established. That all trials are for good, you cannot always see (at least for the present), but you may always believe. You have doubtless reason to be thankful to God that you feel love in your heart. Nay, indeed, thankfulness, gratitude, and love, for benefits received, are almost, if not quite, the same. Accordingly, in this world (whatever be the case in the next) we love him because he hath first loved us. This love is, undoubtedly, the spring of all inward and outward obedience. But we delight

to do what he has commanded; and for that very reason, because he has commanded it. So

Obedience is our pure delight,
To do the pleasure of our Lord.

I was a good deal refreshed with the company of you and your dear sisters when we last met. The more so, because I trust you are all going forward in the good way. Peace be multiplied unto you!

*To Miss Cooke.*

## XCII.

### "IN WHAT SENSE DO YOU PRAY WITHOUT CEASING?"

LONDON, *December* 17, 1787.

MY DEAR SISTER: I love to hear from you, especially when you send me that good news that you still stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free. I have a good hope that you will never lose any of the things which he has wrought in you, but that you will receive a full reward. Do you always find a clear sense of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity? Are you enabled to rejoice evermore? In what sense do you pray without ceasing? And can you in everything give thanks, seeing it is the will of God concerning you in Christ Jesus? What

you speak of your communion with him comforts my heart. I love to read, to hear any part, of your experience. If I doubted of anything you say I would tell you so. I want to know everything wherein I can serve you.

*To Miss Jane Bisson.*

## XCIII.

### "BOLDLY LAY HOLD ON THE PROMISE."

LONDON, *December* 21, 1787.

MY DEAR SISTER: You have unspeakable reason to praise God for his late manifestations to you. And you will generally observe that large consolations are preceded by deep exercises of soul. And we all have reason to praise him for the many tokens we see of his approaching kingdom. It is plain Satan, the murderer and the deceiver of mankind, is in a great measure bound already; he is not now permitted to deceive the nations as in the past ages. And even in the Romish countries scarce any are now called to resist unto blood. If two or three of you continue instant in prayer the work will revive at Trowbridge also. When you are met together boldly lay hold on the promise: his word will speak, and not lie. Peace be with all your spirits!

*To Miss Jane Bisson.*

## XCIV.

### "YOU CANNOT ESCAPE CENSURE."

NEAR LONDON, *February* 20, 1788.

MY DEAR SISTER: Your last letter gave me a very sensible pleasure: indeed, so do all your letters. There is something in your spirit that does me good, that softens and quickens me too; but at the same time that melancholy thought occurs that it is doubtful whether I shall ever have the satisfaction of taking you by the hand again. I shall, if it be the will of Him that orders all things well; who orders all for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. And we know he will not deny to them that fear him any manner of thing that is good.

Your speaking of trials makes me almost cry out, in the words of our poet,

> "Secluded from the world and all its care,
> Hast thou to joy or grieve, to hope or fear?"

Shut up as you are, in your father's house, and a little retired, quiet island, and having food to eat and raiment to put on, what can you find to try you? One of your trials I can easily foresee. With all your innocence and

prudence you cannot escape censure. In spite of all you can do, the good that is in you will surely be evil spoken of. And it is not unlikely, some will join in the cry against you from whom you expected better things. But as you are just entering into life, one would think you had hardly met with any who rewarded you evil for good, and gave you occasion to cry out,

"Ingratitude! sharp as the viper's tooth!"

However, you have one Friend that never fails, and that is always near. What a comfort it is that he is about your bed, and about your path, still laying his hand upon you!

*To Miss Jane Bisson.*

## XCV.

### "BE ALL LIGHT, ALL FIRE, ALL LOVE."

[The Miss Bisson of the preceding letters has become Mrs. Jane Cock.]

LEEDS, *August* 3, 1789.

MY DEAR SISTER: I am always well pleased to hear from you. When I first heard of your marriage I was afraid of two things: the one was, that it would hurt your soul; the other, that it would prevent your usefulness; at least, that you would not be useful in so high a degree as otherwise you might be.

But your last letter has given me much satisfaction. I now hope that your own soul has suffered no loss; and likewise that you will find many opportunities of doing good, and will improve them to the uttermost. I want you to do the will of God below as angels do above. I want you to be all light, all fire, all love, and to grow up in all things into Him that is our Head.

*To Mrs. Jane Cock.*

## XCVI.

### "YOU ARE IN HIS SCHOOL OF AFFLICTION."

MADELEY, *March* 29, 1788.

MY DEAR SISTER: You see I cannot refuse anything that you desire; so I write the first opportunity. I was much surprised at the account which you gave of what had lately befallen your friend. But in the whole course of that strange affair one may discover the hand of God. I am persuaded it was the hand of God for good, both in regard to him and you: to him, that he might learn both more patience and resignation in himself, and more meekness and forbearance toward others; to you, that, being cut off from worldly hope, you might simply and nakedly hang upon the living God! You

have already tasted that he is gracious. Go on! You are in his school, the school of affliction, where you will always find him a present help. But he does not yet clearly point out the way that you should go. I was greatly pleased with your openness the other day.

*To Miss Harriet Lewis.*

## XCVII.

### "TO BE NOT ALMOST BUT ALTOGETHER A CHRISTIAN."

DUBLIN, *April* 2, 1789.

MY DEAR SISTER: Considering how changeable human nature is, I should have thought you would have forgotten me before now; I was therefore agreeably surprised when I had the pleasure of seeing you at Dudley. You seemed to be just the same as you were the first time that I conversed with you at Mr. Moor's house; to be as desirous now as you were then, to be not almost but altogether a Christian. But if this be your determination you must remember you cannot be warm alone; you must needs find one, if not more, with whom you can converse freely on the things of God. This you may properly make matter of prayer, and sooner or later your prayer will be heard, although some

of those with whom you once conversed are grown cold. But God is able to provide you with others who will not be unstable as water. It is a great blessing that he has upheld your goings in the way, and enabled you still to press on to the mark. May he stablish, strengthen, and settle you!

*To Miss Harriet Lewis.*

## XCVIII.

### "O LOOK UNTO HIM, AND BE SAVED!"

WITHOUT doubt it seems to you that yours is a peculiar case. You think there is none like you in the world. Indeed there are. It may be ten thousand persons are now in the same state of mind as you. I myself was so a few years ago. I felt the wrath of God abiding on me. I was afraid every hour of dropping into hell. I knew myself to be the chief of sinners. Though I had been very innocent in the account of others, I saw my heart to be all sin and corruption. I was without the knowledge and the love of God, and therefore an abomination in his sight.

But I had an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And so have you. He died for your sins, and he is now pleading for

you at the right hand of God. O look unto him, and be saved! He loves you freely, without any merit of yours. He has atoned for all your sins.

See all your sins on Jesus laid.

His blood has paid for all. Fear nothing; only believe. His mercy embraces you; it holds you in on every side. Surely you shall not depart hence till your eyes have seen his salvation.

*To Miss H——.*

## XCIX.

### "THE BEST MEANS OF PURIFYING YOUR SOUL."

[Miss J. C. March was a regular correspondent of Mr. Wesley, but he appears to have written her but few letters. We know little concerning her beyond what Mr. Wesley's letter states. We have her experience as told to him: "O how sweet a life is the life of faith, which teaches how to depend on Christ alone for all we want; which saves the soul from all confidence in the flesh, while it enriches and fills it with love, peace, joy, long-suffering.... There is hardly anything so blest to me as reading the word of God, and sometimes I think I never believed the Bible till within these last nine months; every word seems so spoken to my heart; I so feel, *All is yours.*"]

ALNWICK.

SOMETIMES I have been afraid lest you should sustain loss for want of some reproach or disgrace. Your being young and a

woman of fortune and not wanting in understanding were circumstances which, according to the ordinary course of providence, keep reproach at a distance. However, you shall not escape it, if our blessed Lord sees it to be the best means of purifying your soul. You shall have it just in due measure and in due time; for he will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good. There is one with me here who seems as yet to be under a peculiar dispensation; to be wholly screened from the reproach of Christ. There is something in the natural temper, the understanding, the person, and the behavior of Lady M. which has hitherto prevented reproach, although she is much devoted to God and in many things quite singular. But she is not careful about it, being willing, whenever he shall see it best, and in whatever measure he shall choose, to share the portion of her Lord. The knowledge of ourselves is true humility, and without this we cannot be freed from vanity, a desire of praise being inseparably connected with every degree of pride. Continual watchfulness is absolutely necessary to hinder this from stealing in upon us. But as long as we steadily watch and pray we shall not enter into temptation. It may, and

will, assault us on every side, but it cannot prevail.

*To J. C. M.*

C.

"IF THERE IS NO FIGHT THERE IS NO VICTORY."

[The daughter of Rev. Vincent Perronet was once called by Wesley "a burning and a shining light." She believed "Christians ought to be like something poured out to all around." She had "high views of the holiness necessary to qualify the soul to appear with joy before the judgment seat of Christ, and as the state of her nerves was remarkably weak she was peculiarly exposed to the fiery darts of the devil, and frequently lived under the most painful apprehensions lest when called for by her Lord she should not be found completely ready, without spot before God." Her father writes: "September 9, 1782, my dear daughter Damaris was taken up into heaven in an apoplectic fit. So that at this time I have *ten* in glory, with their dear mother!"]

DUBLIN, *March* 30, 1771.

I DO not wonder you should find such a nearness to M. B. She is an amiable young woman. When she was with us last I marked her every word, and almost every meaning, but I could find nothing to reprove. There was in all her actions sanctity and love. God sent her to you in an acceptable time. She came with a good message, and blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were spoken unto her. He

will water you every moment, and on this depends the continuance of the great salvation. It will surely continue if you watch and pray, and yet not without temptation. I expect temptations will come about you

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the vales.

But what are temptations to you? He giveth occasions of fighting that you may conquer. If there is no fighting there is no victory. There is no general rule whereby we can always determine whether a thought come from a good or an evil spirit; but on all particular occasions we may plead that promise, "If a man be willing to do my will, he shall know of the doctrine," or suggestion, by the light then given, "whether it be of God."

*To Miss Damaris Perronet.*

# TWO SERIES OF LETTERS.

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## 1. LETTERS TO A YOUNG DISCIPLE.
## 2. LETTERS TO A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

These two series of letters were written to two young women whose names are not given.

## I. LETTERS TO A YOUNG DISCIPLE.

### CI.

"WHAT IS IT OUR LORD CALLS YOU TO NOW?"

DUBLIN, *March* 30, 1771.

SO poor, tempted, disconsolate —— was sent to London for your sake also! She was sent to you, among others, to quicken your expectation of the great salvation. And what is it our Lord calls you to now? Whereunto thou hast attained, hold fast! You may undoubtedly lose what God has given; but you never need. Is not his grace sufficient for you? Is not his strength made perfect in weakness? Indeed, you shall pass through the fire, but lean upon him, and the flames shall not kindle upon you. You shall go through the waters; but keep hold on him, and the floods shall not run over you. Suffer all, and conquer all.

> In every temptation, He keeps you to prove
> His utmost salvation, his fullness of love.

Be exceeding wary in your conversation, that it may be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Let

not the liveliness of your spirit lead you into levity; cheerful seriousness is the point you are to aim at. And be willing to suffer with him, that you may reign with him. Deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow him!

## CII.

### "THERE ARE TIMES OF NEARER ACCESS TO GOD."

BANDON, *May* 2, 1771.

THERE is no fear I should forget you, especially at this time, when all the powers of hell are engaged against you; but let them come about you like bees, they shall be extinct as the fire among the thorns. Tempted you are, and will be; otherwise you could not know your own weakness and the strength of your Master. But all temptations will "work together for good;" all are for your profit, that you may be partakers of his holiness. You may always have an evidence both of God's love to you and of yours to him. And, at some times, the former answers the design of him that makes it. It is certain there are times of nearer access to God, and that it nearly imports us to improve those precious seasons. But we may find plausible objections against this, and, indeed, against anything.

## CIII.

### "DIVIDING LINE OF TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD."

DUBLIN, *July* 13, 1771.

TRUTH and falsehood, and so right and wrong tempers, are often divided by an almost imperceptible line. It is the more difficult to distinguish right and wrong tempers, or passions, because, in several instances, the same motion of the blood and animal spirits will attend both one and the other. Therefore, in many cases, we cannot distinguish them but by the unction of the Holy One. In the case you mention all self-complacency or self-approbation is not pride. Certainly there may be self-approbation, which is not sin, though it must occasion a degree of pleasure. "This is our rejoicing, even the testimony of our conscience toward God." And this joy is neither better nor worse for being accompanied with a natural motion of the blood and spirits. Equally natural, and equally innocent, is the joy which we receive from being approved by those we love. But in all these instances there is need of the utmost care, lest we slide from innocent joy, or self-approbation, into that which is not innocent, into pride (thinking of ourselves more

highly than we ought to think), or vanity, a desire of praise.

For thin partitions do their bounds divide.

## CIV.

### "SATAN ATTACKS US ON THE WEAK SIDE."

THE HAY, *August* 24, 1771.

IF you find any comfort or help thereby, write on, without any reasoning about the matter. The various thoughts and suggestions you mention are just such as any person of a lively imagination may expect. Satan, too, very well knows whereof we are made, and always attacks us on the weak side. But these, and a thousand clouds passing over your mind, prove nothing as to the state of your heart; see that this be devoted to him, and it is enough. You have given it him; stand to your gift. However, then, your imagination may be affected, you will have the testimony of a good conscience toward God. Not but that you may plead that promise, "The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." As the former word takes in all your passions, so does the latter all the workings of your reason and imagination. Pray, therefore, and look for the answer of your prayer. It shall come, and not tarry.

## CV.

### "IN DANGER OF HAVING MORE SAIL THAN BALLAST."

KINGSWOOD, *September* 13, 1771.

YOUR present weakness will, I hope, be an unspeakable blessing. You were in danger of having more sail than ballast, more liveliness of imagination than solid wisdom. But it seems God is correcting this defect and giving you more steadiness of mind. You now see and feel what is the real value of this poor, perishable world, and how little real happiness is to be found in all things under the sun.

It is right to pour out our whole soul before Him that careth for us. But it is good, likewise, to unbosom ourselves to a friend in whom we can confide. This also is an appointed means which it generally pleases God to bless.

## CVI.

### "PEACE WILL INCREASE AS YOUR FAITH INCREASES."

WHITNEY, *October* 16, 1771.

IT is no fault to be grieved at the unkindness of those we love: only it may go to an excess, so that we have need to watch in this,

as in all things, seeing the life of man is a temptation upon earth. And it is no fault not to grieve for the censure we must often meet with for following our own conscience. Of those little ones you cannot be too tender or too careful; and as you are frequently alone you may teach them many important lessons, as they are able to bear them. But it requires immense patience; for you must tell them the same thing ten times over, or you do nothing.

A higher degree of that peace which may well be said to pass all understanding will keep, not only your heart, but all the workings of your mind (as the word properly signifies), both of your reason and imagination, from all irregular sallies. This peace will increase as your faith increases; one always keeps pace with the other. So that on this account also your continual prayer should be, "Lord, increase my faith!" A continual desire is a continual prayer, that is, in a low sense of the word; for there is a far higher sense—such an open intercourse with God, such a close, uninterrupted communion with him, as G. Lopez experienced, and not a few of our brethren now alive. This you also should aspire after, as you know he with whom we have to do is no respecter of persons.

## CVII.

### "THE WHOLE OF RELIGION CONTRACTED TO A POINT."

*January* 5, 1772.

IT is not always a defect to mind one thing at a time. And an aptness so to do, to employ the whole vigor of the mind on the thing in hand, may answer excellent purposes. Only you have need to be exceeding wary, lest the thing you pursue be wrong. First, be well assured not only that it is good, but that it is the best thing for you at that time; and then, whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might. But you have all things in one, the whole of religion contracted to a point, in that word, "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us." All is contained in humble, gentle, patient love. Is not this, so to speak, a divine contrivance to assist the narrowness of our minds, the scantiness of our understandings? Every right temper, and then all right words and actions, naturally branch out of love. In effect, therefore, you want nothing but this, to be filled with the faith that worketh by love.

## CVIII.

### "OUR ADVANCES IN THE RACE SET BEFORE US."

*July* 23, 1773.

AT many times our advances in the race set before us are clear and perceptible; at other times they are no more perceptible (at least to ourselves) than the growth of a tree. At any time you may pray,

> "Strength and comfort from Thy word,
> Imperceptibly supply."

And when you perceive nothing it does not follow that the work of God stands still in your soul, especially while your desire is unto him, and while you choose him for your portion. He does not leave you to yourself, though it may seem so to your apprehension. The difference between temptation and sin is generally plain enough to all that are simple of heart; but in some exempt cases it is not plain; there we want the unction of the Holy One. Voluntary humility, calling every defect a sin, is not well-pleasing to God. Sin, properly speaking, is neither more nor less than "a voluntary transgression of a known law of God."

There are a thousand instances wherein it

is not possible literally to make restitution. All that we can advise in the case you mention is, 1. Let him that stole, steal no more; let him be from this hour rigorously just. 2. Let him be a faithful steward of the mammon of unrighteousness, restoring all he can to God, in the poor.

## CIX.

### "MY OWN MOTHER."

*August* 20, 1773.

I OFTEN heard my own mother make the same complaint with you. She did not *feel* near so much as my father did; but she *did* ten times more than he did. You must labor to *do* so much the more, and pray that God would supply whatever is wanting. One degree of forgiveness is due to everyone, though impenitent; still I love him as I love all men. But the other degree, whereby I should again receive him as a friend, is only due to one who says, "I repent;" that is, convinces me that he does really repent and is entirely changed.

It is certain God has given you a talent, and I still think it ought to be used. I grant, indeed, to be hid and to be still is more agreeable to flesh and blood; but is it more agree-

able to him "who hath left us an example that we might tread in his steps?"

One cannot be saved from evil tempers without being devoted to God; neither can a soul be all devoted to God without being saved from sin; but it is often exceeding hard to judge of others, whether they are saved from all evil tempers, and whether they are all devoted to God or not; yea, it is hard to judge of ourselves; nay, we cannot do it without the anointing of the Holy One given for that purpose. Out of darkness God will command light to shine. Be plain and open to all; then, whether they are sincere or insincere, you will have a conscience void of offense. You find all things work together for good. They must, while the hairs of your head are all numbered.

## CX.

### "ONLY JUST BEGINNING TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST."

LEWISHAM, *December* 3, 1773.

YOU are yourself a living witness of this religion. But it is only in a low degree. I grant you are only just beginning to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is an unspeakable blessing that he shows you this in so clear

and strong a light. And undoubtedly he is able to make you completely serious, and yet this is consistent with much cheerfulness. You shall have more or less of reproach as he chooses. Your part is to leave all in his hands who orders all things well. Go straight forward, and you shall be all a Christian! I expect that you will be more and more a comfort to, my dear, Yours, affectionately.

## II. LETTERS TO A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

### CXI.

"REJOICE IN GOD YOUR SAVIOUR."

*March* 4, 1760.

CERTAINLY the more freedom you use the more advantage you will find. But at the same time it will be needful continually to remember from whom every good and perfect gift cometh. If He blesses our intercourse with each other, then we shall never repent of the labor.

It is a blessing, indeed, when God uncovers our hearts and clearly shows us what spirit we are of. But there is no manner of necessity that this self-knowledge should make us miserable. Certainly the highest degree of it is well consistent both with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Therefore how deeply soever you may be convinced of pride, self-will, peevishness, or any other inbred sin, see that you do not let go that confidence whereby you may still rejoice in God your Saviour.

Some, indeed, have been quite unhappy, though they retained their faith, through desire on the one hand and conviction on the other. But that is nothing to you; you need never give up anything which you have already received; you will not, if you keep close to that,

> For this my vehement soul stands still;
> Restless, resign'd, for this I wait.

We have a fuller, clearer knowledge of our own members than of those belonging to other societies, and may, therefore, without any culpable partiality, have a better opinion of them.

It is a great thing to spend all our time to the glory of God. But you need not be scrupulous as to the precise time of reading and praying; I mean as to the dividing it between one and the other. A few minutes one way or the other are of no great importance.

May He who loves you fill you with his pure love!

## CXII.

### "PRAYER THE GRAND MEANS OF DRAWING NEAR TO GOD."

*March* 29, 1760.

HAVING a little longer reprieve, I snatch the opportunity of writing a few lines before we embark. Prayer is certainly the

grand means of drawing near to God, and all others are helpful to us only so far as they are mixed with, or prepare us for, this. The comfort of it may be taken away by wandering thoughts, but not the benefit; violently to fight against these is not the best and speediest way to conquer them; but rather humbly and calmly to ask and wait for his help, who will bruise Satan under your feet. You may undoubtedly remain in peace and joy until you are perfected in love. You need neither enter into a dispute, when persons speak wrong, nor yet betray the truth; there is a middle way. You may simply say, "I believe otherwise; but I think and let think; I am not fond of contending on this or any other head, lest I receive more hurt than I can do good." Remember your calling; be

> A simple follower of the Lamb,
> And harmless as a little child.

## CXIII.

### "NEVER BE AFRAID OF EXPECTING TOO MUCH."

*June* 17, 1761.

I APPREHEND your great danger now is this, to think you never shall receive that blessing because you have not received it yet.

Nay, perhaps, you may be tempted to believe that there is no such thing, and that those who thought they had received it were mistaken as well as you. This danger will be increased if some who professed to be sanctified long ago, and yet have not received this blessing, affirm there is no such thing, and begin to warn others against falling into this delusion. But keep close to your rule, the word of God, and to your guide, the Spirit of God, and never be afraid of expecting too much; as yet you are but a babe. O what heights of holiness are to come! I hope you do not forget to pray for me. Adieu!

## CXIV.

### "THE EARNEST AND THE SLACK."

*May* 13, 1762.

YOU did well to write. "It is good to hide the secrets of a king; but to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord." Have you never found any wandering since? Is your mind always stayed on God? Do you find every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ? Do no vain thoughts (useless, trifling, unedifying) lodge within you? Does not the corruptible body at some times, more or less, press down the soul?

Has God made your very dreams devout? I have known Satan assault in their sleep (endeavoring to terrify or affright) those whom he could not touch when they were awake.

As to your band, there are two sorts of persons with whom you may have to do—the earnest and the slack; the way you are to take with the one is quite different from that one would take with the other. The latter you must search, and find out why they are slack; exhort them to repent, be zealous, do the first works. The former you have only to encourage, to exhort, to push forward to the mark, to bid them grasp the prize so nigh. And do so yourself. Receive a thousand more blessings; believe more, love more; you cannot love enough. Beware of sins of omission.

## CXV.

### "SOME HAVE MORE OF HEAT, SOME OF LIGHT."

*October* 9, 1762.

THOUGH I have very little time I must write a few lines. I thank you for your comfortable letter. Some have more of heat, and some of light. The danger is that one should say to the other, "I have no need of thee," or that any should mistake his place

and imagine himself to be what he is not. Be not backward to speak to any whom you think are mistaken, either in this or other things. A loving word, spoken in faith, shall not fall to the ground, and the more freely you speak to me at any time, or on any head, the more you will oblige.

## CXVI.

### THE SCRIPTURALLY PERFECT.

*April* 7, 1763.

THE true Gospel touches the very edge of both Calvinism and Antinomianism, so that nothing but the power of God can prevent our sliding either into the one or the other.

The nicest point of all which relates to Christian perfection is that which you inquire of. Thus much is certain: they that love God with all their heart, and all men as themselves, are scripturally perfect. And surely such there are, otherwise the promise of God would be a mere mockery of human weakness. Hold fast this; but then remember, on the other hand, you have this treasure in an earthen vessel; you dwell in a poor, shattered house of clay, which presses down the immortal spirit. Hence all your thoughts, words,

and actions are so imperfect, so far from coming up to the standard (that law of love, which, but for the corruptible body, your soul would answer in all instances) that you may well say, till you go to Him you love,

"Every moment, Lord, I need the merit of thy death."

## CXVII.

### A CAUSE OF SECOND DARKNESS—EVIL REASONING.

*October* 13, 1764.

I DO not see that you can speak otherwise than you do in your band. If you sought their approbation, that would be wrong; but you may suffer it without blame. Indeed, in these circumstances you must, since it is undeniably plain that the doing otherwise would hurt rather than help their souls. I believe Miss F—— thought she felt evil before she did, and by that very thought gave occasion to its reentrance. You ought not to speak explicitly to many; very few would understand or know how to advise you. For some time I thought M—— did, and was therefore glad of your acquaintance with him, hoping he would lead you by the hand in a more profitable manner than I was able to do, but

I afterward doubted. The Lord send you help by whom he will send!

From what not only you but many others likewise have experienced we find there is very frequently a kind of wilderness state, not only after justification, but even after deliverance from sin, and I doubt whether the sermon upon that state might not give you light in this case also. But the most frequent cause of this second darkness or distress, I believe, is evil reasoning; by this three in four of those who cast away their confidence are gradually induced so to do. And if this be the cause, is there any way to regain that deliverance but by resuming your confidence? And can you receive it, unless you receive it freely, not of works, but by mere grace? This is the way; walk thou in it. Dare to believe! Look up and see thy Saviour near! When? To-morrow or to-day? Nay, to-day hear his voice. At this time; at this place. Lord, speak; thy servant heareth!

## CXVIII.

### "ARE YOU STILL MAKING THE BEST OF LIFE?"

*June* 29, 1767.

FOR some days you have been much on my mind. Are you still making the best of life? employing a few days exactly in such a

manner as you judge is most to the glory of God? And do you still hold fast what you have received and expect the fullness of the promise? Surely you may retain all that earnestness of expectation to which Mr. M—— used to incite you without any prejudice either to humility or sobriety of spirit. Doubtless it is possible, with Mr. Dryden's leave, "to be wise and love" at the same time, and neither of these need interfere with the other, seeing the spirit of love is also the spirit of wisdom. Are all your family breathing this spirit and strengthening each other's hands in God? I hope you have the satisfaction of observing the same thing in most of those that are round about you, and of seeing the work of God prosper wherever you have occasion to be. When you are with the genteel part of your acquaintance you have more immediate need of watching unto prayer, or you will insensibly drink into the lightness of their spirit and abate a little of the accuracy of your walking. Nay, stand fast, walking in every point as Christ also walked. Fashion and custom are nothing to you; you have a more excellent rule. You are resolved to be a Bible Christian, and that, by the grace of God, not in some, but in all points. Go on in the name

of God and in the power of his might. Still let your eye be single; aim at one point; retain and increase your communion with God. You have nothing else to do.

> Happy and wise, the time redeem,
> And live, my friend, and die to Him.

At some times we must look at outward things; such is the present condition of humanity. But we have need quickly to return home; for what avails all but Christ reigning in the heart?

> Daily in his grace to grow?

What else have we to care for? Only now to use all the grace we have received, and now to expect all we want. The Lord Jesus swallow you up in his love!

## CXIX.

### "EXERCISED IN THINGS DIVINE."

*May*, 1769.

BY comparing your own outward state with Mrs. —— you now see clearly the advantages you enjoy; you have nothing external to hinder your waiting upon God without carefulness and without distraction. None has a right to interrupt you while you are

exercised in things divine and laboring to be holy in body and spirit. You may have just so much and no more connection with any one as experience shows is profitable for you. O stand fast in this liberty, glorifying God with all you have and all you are!

It is remarkable that St. Paul places this the last of all, that "love endureth all things;" and this is the sum of his wish with regard to the Colossians, "that they might be strengthened into all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." They who have attained this are ripe for the inheritance and ready to salute their friends in light. There is a time when we grow up toward this, even without any sensible increase; as in the parable, the seed groweth and springs up, he knoweth not how. At many times, indeed, we do know how the power of the Highest suddenly overshadows us, while either the first or the pure love is shed abroad in our hearts. But at other times he confirms and increases that love in a gradual and almost insensible manner.

## CXX.

### "CONNECTION BETWEEN RIGHT JUDGMENT AND RIGHT TEMPERS."

*July* 6, 1770.

WHEN things are viewed at a distance one would be apt to imagine that no degree of sorrow could be found in a heart that rejoices evermore; that no right temper could be wanting, much less any degree of a wrong temper subsist, in a soul that is filled with love; and yet I am in doubt whether there be any soul clothed with flesh and blood which enjoys every right temper, and in which is no degree of any wrong one; suppose of ill-judged zeal, or more or less affection for some person than that person really deserves. When we say, "This is a natural, necessary consequence of the soul's union with a corruptible body," the assertion is by no means clear till we add, "because of the weakness of understanding which results from this union;" admitting this the case is plain. There is so close a connection between right judgment and right tempers, as well as right practice, that the latter cannot easily subsist without the former. Some wrong temper, at least in a small degree, almost necessarily follows from

wrong judgment; I apprehend when many say, "Sin must remain while the body remains," this is what they mean, though they cannot make it out.

You say, "My silence usually proceeds from my views and thoughts of myself as a Christian." Bishop Fénelon says, "Simplicity is that grace which frees the soul from all unnecessary reflections upon itself." See here one sort of simplicity which you want! When I speak or write to you I have you before my eyes, but, generally speaking, I do not think of myself at all. I do not think whether I am wise or foolish, knowing or ignorant; but I see you aiming at glory and immortality, and say just what I hope may direct your goings in the way and prevent your being weary or faint in your mind. Our Lord will order all things well for Sister T——. What can hurt those who trust in him?

## CXXI.

### "THE WHOLE COMPASS OF RELIGION."

*September* 15, 1770.

TO use the grace given is the certain way to obtain more grace. To use all the faith you have will bring an increase of faith. But this word is of very wide extent; it takes in

the full exercise of every talent wherewith we are intrusted. This comprises the whole compass of both inward and outward religion. That you may be able steadily and effectually to attend to this you have need of that prayer, "Give me understanding, that I may keep thy law; yea, that I may keep it with my whole heart." This is to "make the best of life," which cannot be done without growing in grace.

A sense of wants and of weaknesses, with various trials and temptations, will do you no real hurt, though they occasion heaviness for a time and abate your joy in the Lord. It is wrong so to attend to this as to weaken our faith, and yet, in the general, it is not wrong "to form your estimate of the state of your soul from your sensations;" not, indeed, from these alone, but from these in conjunction with your words and actions. It is true we cannot judge of ourselves by the measure of our joy, the most variable of all our sensations and frequently depending, in a great degree, on the state of our blood and spirits. But if you take love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, and resignation together, I know no surer rule whereby to judge of your state to Godward.

## CXXII.

### "ANGER AT SIN IS A DUTY."

*May* 31, 1771.

ALTHOUGH we have "faith's abiding impression realizing things to come," yet as long as we are in the body we have but an imperfect, shadowy knowledge of the things of eternity. For now we only see them in a glass, a mirror, which gives us no more than a shadow of them; therefore we see them darkly, or in a riddle, as St. Paul speaks. The whole invisible world is as yet a riddle to us; and it seems to be in this sense that some writers speak so much of the night or darkness of faith, namely, when opposed to sight; that is, to the view of things which we shall have when the veil of flesh and blood is removed.

Those reasonings concerning the measure of holiness (a curious, not useful, question) are not inconsistent with pure love, but they tend to damp it, and were you to pursue them far they would lead you into unbelief.

What you feel is certainly a degree of anger, but not of sinful anger; there ought to be in us (as there was in our Lord) not barely a

perception in the understanding that this or that is evil, but also an emotion of mind, a sensation or passion suitable thereto. This anger at sin, accompanied with love and compassion to the sinner, is so far from being itself a sin that it is rather a duty. St. Paul's word is, "not easily provoked" to any paroxysm of anger; neither are you; nevertheless, I suppose there is in you, when you feel a proper anger at sin, a hurrying motion of the blood and spirits, which is an imperfection, and will be done away.

## CXXIII.

### "I LOVE ONE THAT PERSEVERES IN DRY DUTY."

*June* 25, 1771.

UNDOUBTEDLY the reward which is purchased for us by the blood of the covenant will be proportioned to what we are (through grace), what we do, and what we suffer. Whatever, therefore, prevents our doing good prevents our receiving so full a reward; and what can countervail that loss? It is certainly right that we should bear one another's burdens; that we should weep with them that weep, and for them that weep not for themselves. "When Jesus saw them weeping, he troubled himself;" he willingly sustained that emotion; he voluntarily suffered that sor-

row, and it is good for us to tread in his steps. "But how far?" Just so far as does not disqualify us for any other part of our duty; so far as softens, not unnerves, the mind; as makes us more, not less, zealous of good works.

Undoubtedly there are various kinds and various degrees of communion with God; we cannot confine it to one only; it may take in the exercise of every affection, either single or variously mixed together, and may run through all our outward employments. The most desirable prayer is that where we can quite pour out our soul and freely talk with God. But it is not this alone which is acceptable to him. "I love one," said a holy man, "that perseveres in dry duty." Beware of thinking even this is labor lost. God does much work in the heart even at those seasons.

> And when the soul, sighing to be approved,
> Says, "Could I love," and stops, God writeth,
> "Loved!"

## CXXIV.

### "THE PROPERTIES OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP."

*June* 17, 1774.

THE praying much for those we love much is doubtless the fruit of affection, but such an affection as is well-pleasing to God

and is wrought in us by his own Spirit. Therefore it is certain the intercession that flows from that affection is according to the will of God.

That is an exceedingly nice question, "How far may we desire the approbation of good men?" I think it cannot be proved that such a desire is anywhere forbidden in Scripture. But it requires a very strong influence of the Holy Spirit to prevent its running into excess.

Friendship is one species of love, and is in its proper sense a disinterested reciprocal love between two persons. Wicked persons are, it seems, incapable of friendship. For "he who fears no God can love no friend." Nor, indeed, is every one that fears God capable of friendship. It requires a peculiar turn of mind, without which it can have no being. The properties of Christian friendship are the same as the properties of love; with those which St. Paul so beautifully describes in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. And it produces, as occasions offer, every good word and work. Many have laid down the rules whereby it should be regulated, but they are not to be comprised in a few lines. One is, "Give up everything to

your friend except a good conscience toward God."

There have undoubtedly been instances of real friendship among Jews, yea, and among heathens who were susceptible of it; but they were by no means wicked men; they were men fearing God and working righteousness, according to the dispensation they were under. I apprehend wicked men, under whatever dispensation, to be absolutely incapable of true friendship. By wicked men I mean either men openly profane or men void of justice, mercy, and truth. There may be a shadow of friendship between those, whether of the same or of different sexes. But surely the substance is wanting; in all my experience I have found no exception to this rule.

## CXXV.

### "SUM UP THE EXPERIENCE OF PERSONS."

*November* 30, 1774.

WHEN I formerly removed from one college to another I fixed my resolution not to be hastily acquainted with anyone; indeed, not to return any visit unless I had a reasonable hope of receiving or doing good therein. This my new neighbors generally imputed to pride; and I was willing to suffer the imputation.

I "sum up the experience" of persons, too, in order to form their general character. But in doing this we take a different way of making our estimate. It may be you chiefly regard (as my brother does) the length of their experience. Now, this I make little account of; I measure the depth and breadth of it. Does it sink deep in humble, gentle love? Does it extend wide in all inward and outward holiness? If so I do not care whether they are of five or five-and-thirty years' standing. Nay, when I look at Miss —— or Miss —— I am ready to hide my face; I am ashamed of having set out before they were born.

Undoubtedly Miss J—— is deep in grace and lives like an angel here below. Yet some things in her character I do not admire; I impute them to human frailty. Many years ago I might have said, but do not now,

> "Give me a woman made of stone,
> A widow of Pygmalion."

And just such a Christian one of the fathers, Clemens Alexandrinus, describes; but I do not admire that description now as I did formerly. I now see a Stoic and a Christian are different characters, and at some times I have been a good deal disgusted at Miss J——'s

apathy. When God restores our friends to us we ought to rejoice ; it is a defect if we do not. In that and several other instances I take knowledge of S—— R——'s littleness of understanding ; and this, as well as our temper, we ought to improve to the utmost of our power, which can no otherwise be done than by reading authors of various kinds, as well as by thinking and conversation. If we read nothing but the Bible we should hear nothing but the Bible, and then what becomes of preaching ?

Many people have clear conceptions of a few things, concerning which they judge and reason. But they have no clear ideas of other things. So if they reason about them they stumble at every step. None can have general good sense unless they have clear and determinate ideas of all things.

## CXXVI.

### "I FEEL MORE WANT OF HEAT THAN LIGHT."

*June* 9, 1775.

I AM less careful about your increase in knowledge, any farther than it tends to love. There is a danger of your laying more stress on this than sound reason requires.

Otherwise you would reap much profit from sermons which do not improve your knowledge, which do not apply to the understanding so directly as to the heart. I feel more want of heat than light. I value light; but it is nothing compared to love. Aim at this, my dear friend, in all public exercises, and then you will seldom be disappointed. Then you will not stop on the threshold of perfection (I trust you do not now); but will press on to the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, till you experimentally know all that love of God which passeth all (speculative) knowledge.

The lengthening of your life and the restoring your health are invaluable blessings. But do you ask how you shall improve them to the glory of the Giver? And are you willing to know? Then I will tell you how. Go and see the poor and sick in their own poor little hovels. Take up your cross, woman! Remember the faith! Jesus went before you, and will go with you. Put off the gentlewoman; you bear a higher character. You are an heir of God and joint heir with Christ. Are you not going to meet him in the air with ten thousand of his saints? O be ready!

## CXXVII.

### "DO NOT CONFINE YOUR CONVERSATION TO GENTEEL AND ELEGANT PEOPLE."

*February* 7, 1776.

I HAVE found some of the uneducated poor who have exquisite taste and sentiment, and many, very many, of the rich who have scarcely any at all. But I do not speak of this; I want you to converse more, abundantly more, with the poorest of the people, who, if they have not taste, have souls, which you may forward in their way to heaven. And they have (many of them) faith, and the love of God, in a larger measure than any persons I know. Creep in among these, in spite of dirt and a hundred disgusting circumstances; and thus put off the gentlewoman. Do not confine your conversation to genteel and elegant people. I should like this as well as you do; but I cannot discover a precedent for it in the life of our Lord or any of his apostles. My dear friend, let you and I walk as he walked.

I now understand you with regard to the P——s; but I fear in this you are too delicate. It is certain their preaching is attended with the power of God to the hearts of many,

and why not to yours? Is it not owing to a want of simplicity? "Are you going to hear Mr. Wesley?" said a friend to Mr. Blackwell. "No," he answered, "I am going to hear God. I listen to him, whoever preaches; otherwise I lose all my labor."

"You will only be content to convert worlds? You shall hew wood or carry brick and mortar; and when you do this in obedience to the order of Providence it shall be more profitable to your own soul than the other." You may remember Mr. De Renty's other remarks: "I then saw that a well-instructed Christian is never hindered by any person or thing. For whatever prevents his doing good works gives him a fresh opportunity of submitting his will to the will of God, which at that time is more pleasing to God, and more profitable to his soul, than anything else which he could possibly do."

Never let your expenses exceed your income. To servants I would give full as much as others give for the same service, and not more. It is impossible to lay down any general rules as to "saving all we can," and "giving all we can." In this, it seems, we must needs be directed, from time to time, by the unction of the Holy One. Evil spirits have

undoubtedly abundance of work to do in an evil world, frequently in concurrence with wicked men, and frequently without them.

## CXXVIII.

### "CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH SHOCK THE DELICACY OF OUR EDUCATION."

*February* 26, 1776.

WHAT I advise you to is not to contract a friendship, or even acquaintance, with poor, inelegant, uneducated persons; but frequently, nay, constantly, to visit the poor, the widow, the sick, the fatherless, in their affliction; and this, although they should have nothing to recommend them, but that they are bought with the blood of Christ. It is true this is not pleasing to flesh and blood. There are a thousand circumstances usually attending it which shock the delicacy of our nature, or rather of our education. But yet the blessing which follows this labor of love will more than balance the cross.

"To be uneasy under obligations which we cannot repay" is certainly a fruit of diabolical generosity; and therefore Milton, with great propriety, ascribes it to the devil, and makes him speak quite in character, when

he says, concerning his obligations to God himself,

"So burdensome still paying, still to owe."

I am quite of another mind; I entirely agree with you, that the more sensible we are of such obligations the more happy we are. Surely this yoke is easy, and this burden is light!

## CXXIX.

### "ALWAYS IN HASTE, NEVER IN A HURRY."

*December* 10, 1777.

YOU do not at all understand my manner of life. Though I am always in haste I am never in a hurry, because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit. It is true I travel four or five thousand miles in a year. But I generally travel alone in my carriage, and consequently am as retired ten hours in a day as if I was in a wilderness. On other days I never spend less than three hours (frequently ten or twelve) in the day alone. So there are few persons in the kingdom who spend so many hours secluded from all company. Yet I find time to visit the sick and the poor; and I must do it if I believe the Bible, if I believe these are the marks whereby the Shepherd of

Israel will know and judge his sheep at the great day; therefore, when there is time and opportunity for it, who can doubt but this is matter of absolute duty? When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain a Christian spirit amid the noise and bustle of the world. God taught me better by my own experience. I had ten times more business in America (that is, at intervals) than ever I had in my life. But it was no hindrance to silence of spirit.

Mr. Boehm was chaplain to Prince George of Denmark; secretary to him and Queen Anne; principal manager of almost all the public charities in the kingdom, and employed in numberless private charities. An intimate friend, knowing this, said to him, when they were alone, "Sir, are you not hurt by that amazing hurry of business? I have seen you in your office, surrounded with people, listening to one, dictating to another, and at the same writing to a third; could you then retain a sense of the presence of God?" He answered, "All that company and all that business no more hindered or lessened my communion with God than if I had been all alone in a church kneeling before

the communion table." Was it not the same case with him to whom Gregory Lopez said, "Go and be a hermit in Mexico?" I am concerned for you; I am sorry you should be content with lower degrees of usefulness and holiness than you are called to. But I cannot help it; so I submit; and am still, my dear Miss M——,

Yours in sincere affection.

THE END.

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